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VOL. II. NOS. 2 AND 3 OCTOBER, 1913

# The West in the Diplomacy of the American Revolution

BY

PAUL CHRISLER PHILLIPS, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of History in the University of Montana

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## PREFACE

In this essay I have tried to show to what extent and in what respects the Mississippi Valley was a subject of diplomatic negotiations in the American Revolution. Altho many different views have been advanced on this question, I do not believe that any American scholar has, as yet, made any considerable use of the material available in this country and Europe for the purpose of getting at the exact truth. Doniol did not appreciate the importance of the West in the diplomacy of the American Revolution, and, altho he quotes many important documents bearing on the subject, he omits many of the most valuable, and in no sense does he attempt to explain the whole question.

This study is written almost entirely from the sources and some of its conclusions differ from those commonly accepted, while in other cases, I believe additional light has been thrown upon facts already established. Altho Spain's ambition to get control of the lands bordering on the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi is well known, I do not think that the definite purpose back of her tortuous and apparently vacillating policy has ever been properly explained. Vergennes's professions of friendship for the United States and his opposition to their claims to the West have been regarded too long as proof of his duplicity. Vergennes himself did not regard his policy towards the West as unfriendly to his ally, or as inconsistent with the terms of the treaty of alliance, and, at no time, did he attempt to conceal his views. The evidence shows beyond doubt that he was conceding to the United States all he thought they had a right to claim. The main outlines of British policy are already well understood, but the efforts of Shelburne to detach the Americans from the French alliance have not received the attention they deserve. The greatness of Franklin as a diplomat appears in a new light when it

is understood that, but for the obstinacy of Jay and Adams, he would have obtained for his country the richest parts of Canada.

To establish the facts herein set forth, the archives of Washington, London, and Paris have been searched in addition to a careful reading of all available printed material. I regret that I could not go through the archives of Spain; but I found, in the French foreign office, copies of many Spanish documents obtained by the French ambassadors and agents during the years from 1774 to 1783.

For assistance in preparing this study I am indebted to Professors Evarts B. Greene, Guy Stanton Ford, and Laurence M. Larson of the University of Illinois. I desire also to express my thanks to Mr. Waldo G. Leland of Washington, D. C., for much valuable help and advice while I was working in the archives of Washington and Paris.

To Professor Clarence W. Alvord of the University of Illinois I must acknowledge my greatest obligations. While I was working on this investigation he carefully and painstakingly went over all the material with me, and gave me his time to discuss and analyze every point; and during my study with him he offered many valuable suggestions and helpful criticisms which have added much to the thoroughness of my work.

Notwithstanding my efforts and the assistance of my friends, I realize that there are many weak spots in the study as here presented. On some points the material is not absolutely conclusive, and there are doubtless many valuable documents which I have not unearthed. I hope, however, that in spite of many defects, this essay has added something worth while to our knowledge of the West in the diplomatic negotiations of the American Revolution.

P. C. P.

Missoula, Mont., May, 1913.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Arc. Aff. Etr.—Archives des Affaires Etrangères.
Am. Hist. Rev.—American Historical Review.
Angre.—Angleterre.
Arc. Col.—Archives des Colonies.
Bt. Trs.—British Transcripts.
C. O.—Colonial Office.
Dip. Cor.—Diplomatic Correspondence.
Esp.—Espagne.
E. U.—Etats Unis.
F. O.—Foreign Office.
L. C.—Library of Congress.
Nou. Acq. franc.—Nouvelles Acquisitions françaises.
P. R. O.—Public Record Office.
S. M. C. or Sa. Maj. Chr.—Sa Majesté Chrétienne.
S. M. Cath—Sa Majesté Catholique.
U. of W.—University of Wisconsin.
( )—manuscript illegible.
[ ]—word supplied.

# CHAPTER I

## THE ORIGINS

For more than a century before the American Revolution the Mississippi Valley was an object of interest to the colonizing nations of western Europe, and to their subjects who were scattered along the shores of North America. Spanish adventurers had wandered northward from the Gulf of Mexico; and, from the region of the Great Lakes, French missionaries and traders penetrated to the heart of the continent; while, from the headwaters of the James and Potomac rivers, enterprizing Virginians descended the western slopes of the Alleghanies to claim a share of this rich country.[1] The colonizing efforts of the French and English, and their bitter rivalry during the first half of the eighteenth century, foreshadowed the struggle for the Mississippi; but the ownership of the country between that river and the Alleghanies was not decided until the last French and Indian war witnessed the triumph of the English.

With the Treaty of 1763 eighteenth century diplomacy begins a new development. In Europe and America alike, the close of the Seven Years' War marked "the end of an era, the beginning of an era." France and Spain were both reduced to the rank of second rate powers,[2] while Great Britain, with undisputed supremacy on the ocean, stood forth the arbiter of European politics. In Prussia, Frederick the Great smarted under the sense that he had been

[1]Alvord and Bidgood, *The First Explorations of the Trans-Alleghany Region by the Virginians, 1650-1674,* is a convenient and valuable account of the beginnings of English colonization in the Mississippi Valley.

[2]Vergennes recognized this as a fact. "The deplorable peace of 1763," he informed Louis XVI., "the partition of Poland, and in fact other causes equally disastrous, have struck the greatest blows to the respect for your crown". Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 13.

sacrificed to Hanoverian intrigue, and looked with pleasure on any danger which threatened his former ally.[3] Of the Bourbon powers, Spain was willing to accept her fate if she were given peace and an opportunity to recuperate her wasted fortunes,[4] but the tarnished glory of French arms called loudly for vengeance. "The humiliation of Britain! The prestige of France!"[5] These were the phrases most often on the lips of French statesmen in the decade following the Peace of Paris. To their minds the first was the means to the second. To realize their ambition, the wisest of them knew that, in addition to the old coalition of the *Pacte de Famille,* they must raise up a new foe to Great Britain. The shrewd and crafty Choiseul saw, in the liberty loving English colonies in America, the latent power needed for this purpose. Ever alert for advantages abroad, he carefully nourished national resources at home[6] until France should be ready to strike. To the capable and energetic Vergennes was left the task of building up the new coalition, of guiding its forces against the common enemy, and finally of apportioning the spoils between his greedy

[3]"Ici l'administration envisage comme très probable une guerre de la France et de l'Espagne avec l'Angleterre. Je crains qu'ils ne considerent l'independence des colonies comme devant être une consequence de cette guerre, et ils se flattant d'avoir a y gagner beaucoup." Elliott, British minister to Berlin, to Lord Suffolk (without date). Translation in Circourt, III, 293.

[4]"L'ambition n'animait pas Charles III., il amait la paix." (Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 293.) Ossun, the French minister to Spain, wrote to Vergennes, December 11, 1775, that Charles declared he had no desire to acquire new territory. *Esp.* 578, no. 70. Later (December 28) Charles urged that Spain had much to lose and nothing to gain by war. (*Ibid.,* no. 74.)

[5]Before the conclusion of peace in 1763 France was planning for a new war with England. She wished to repair her losses, and be ready to strike at the first opportunity. Memorial of the Duc de Broglie, 1762. (*Archives de la Marine, B4,* 135, fol. 4-6.) Choiseul had the same ideas in mind. See account of his schemes in Perkins, *France in the American Revolution,* 22-32. "Rappelez-vous Monsieur, que j'ai toujours etabli en principe qu'en nous occupant a humilier l'Angleterre. . . . elle est necessaire dans la balance de l'Europe." Vergennes to Montmorin, September 21, 1779. (Circourt, III,317.)

[6]Perkins, *France in the American Revolution,* 24.

allies. The British conquests of the Seven Years' War became once more a bone of contention, this time between the jarring nations in alliance with France, and around them twined the intricate negotiations of the American Revolution. The Floridas, Canada, and the strip of land lying between the Alleghanies and the Mississippi called by the French "Eastern Louisiana," lacked the population to give them a title rôle in the drama of a world struggle, but their position made them of vital importance in the settlement of peace. The United States desired them as a guarantee against powerful neighbors, while Spain feared the danger to her colonial possesions of a strong, independent nation in the New World.[7] Upon the reconciliation of these divergent interests depended the success of the new French diplomacy, and upon this problem Vergennes was to spend many thoughtful years, only to find its solution wrought out by other men, working on principles strange to his ideas, and with forces unknown to his reasoning.

With the expulsion of France from the New World all fears of the enemy which, for so many generations, had harassed the English colonies, passed away. The treaty of 1763 portended the establishment of the United States, for it left the English colonies free to set their autonomous views against the British imperial policy. Altho the English and American viewpoints were essentially different there were but few to see the necessity of reconciling their antagonistic principles.

[7]See plan of treaty drawn up by Congress in September, 1776. *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), V, 770. In the early discussions of peace the chief American argument for extended boundaries was the necessity of keeping foreign powers at a distance. Luzerne to Vergennes, June 8, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVII., no. 145, new 17.) So fearful was Spain of American power that she insisted that Great Britain be guaranteed possession of Canada and Nova Scotia, and suggested that she be allowed to keep certain places in the states, as New York or Boston. Montmorin, French minister to Madrid, to Vergennes, October 1, 1778 (*Esp.*, 591, no. 61) and again on October 15 (*ibid.*, no. 33, new 61).

In regard to the unoccupied lands of the West the British ministry had two policies before it. One was to throw them open to settlement and allow the inhabitants of the Atlantic seaboard to establish homes there; the other was to keep them in wilderness, inhabited only by Indians and traders. The first of these plans naturally received the support of the Americans, and their chief advocate was Franklin.[8] The ministry was undecided what course to take but at first, under the lead of Lord Shelburne,[9] appeared willing to favor the American desires. For several years there was much discussion of the matter, but no definite policy was adopted.[10]

The tendencies of British politics, however, were becoming more and more imperialistic, and in the development of this new imperialism, three acts of vital importance for the West were promulgated. These were the

[8]As early as 1754 Franklin suggested a "plan for settling the western colonies in North America with reasons for the plan". (*Works* (Smyth ed.), III, 358.) At an early date he also urged the advantages of a settlement in the Illinois country. (*Ibid.*, IV, 462; V, 46.) January 3, 1760, he wrote, "I am therefore by no means for restoring Canada. If we keep it all the country from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi will, in another century be filled with British people." (*Ibid.*, V, 4.)

[9]Shelburne became president of the board of trade in 1763. Altho deficient in education and superficial in thought, his brilliant imagination conceived a grand imperial policy for America. At the same time his friendship for the Americans led him to favor colonial development. Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, gives a good account of his work. The beginning of British activity in the West dates back to 1748 with the formation of the Ohio Company. See Alden, *New Governments West of the Alleghanies before 1780*. November 11, 1761, the Board of Trade established the principle of buying lands of the Indians before settling them, but did not annul any former grant. Charles Townshend had been president of the Board of Trade, and possibly was the author of the first attempt to form a western policy. He early favored a limitation of colonial rights. Fitzmaurice, *Life of Shelburne*, says that he wished to leave fifteen regiments in America.

[10]Alvord, *Genesis of the Proclamation of 1763. (Mich. Hist. Col.*, XXXVI, 23.)

Royal Proclamation of 1763, the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768, and the Quebec Act of 1774.[11] The first of these was but a temporary arrangement until a consistent western policy could be worked out. It established an arbitrary government for the Floridas and Quebec, but promised popular representation as soon as their "state and circumstances" would permit. The southern boundary of Quebec was drawn from the south end of Lake Nipissing to the intersection of the forty-fifth parallel with the St. Lawrence River, and the northern boundary of West Florida was placed on the thirty-first degree of north latitude. The intervening territory, bounded on the east by the Alleghanies, and on the west by the Mississippi, was reserved "for the present" in possession of the Indians. The proclamation forbade any governor or commander-in-chief "to grant Warrants of Survey, or pass Patents for any Lands beyond the Heads or Sources of any of the Rivers which fall into the Atlantic Ocean from the West or North West," altho provision was made for the purchase by the government, of the lands which it had closed to its subjects.

In spite of the restrictions of the king's proclamation the Americans at once began to push their settlements westward.[12] It was not long, however, before trouble arose between the Indians and the frontiersmen and soon became so serious that the British ministry was again obliged to interfere. The Treaty of Fort Stanwix, opened to settlement the upper valleys of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers and into these regions frontiersmen quickly pushed their way. So rapid was their immigration that by the outbreak

[11]For the first of these see *Canadian Archives Report*, 1906, p. 119; for the second, Alvord, *The British Ministry and the Treaty of Fort Stanwix (Proceedings of State Hist. Soc. of Wisconsin* for 1908, pp. 165-183); for the third, Coffin, *The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution (U. of W.* Bulletin, I, no. 3, 1896).

[12]For discussion of American attempts to establish themselves west of the Alleghanies see Alden, *New Governments West of the Alleghanies before 1780.*

of the Revolution the forests of Kentucky and Tennessee contained a population large enough to dispute British claims to ownership.

In regard to the lands north of the Ohio a different rule was followed. Settlements were persistently discouraged, and throughout its whole extent, this region was peopled only by Indians and a few hundred French "habitants" gathered together in drowsy, ancient villages.[13] Across its prairies roamed fur traders of English, French, and Spanish nationality, knowing no law but their own wills. Altho this country was not open to settlement, it was still regarded as belonging to the thirteen colonies until, in 1774, their titles were swept away. The Quebec Act of that year incorporated the country north of the Ohio and west of the Alleghanies with the province of Quebec, and to the English colonists it appeared that they were to be forever barred from the vast regions behind them. By this act half of the back countries was definitely separated from the influence of Anglo-Saxon institutions and intrusted to the arbitrary rule of a military governor under French law. Protests were unavailing, but the enforcement of the act, together with other unpopular measures of the royal government, was fast driving the colonies to rebellion.[14]

These acts of the British ministry divided the conquests of the Seven Years' War into four districts, each of which was to be a distinct issue in the diplomacy of the Revolution. Canada, with its distinctive population and institutions, was not in sympathy with the ideals of the English colonies; but the ultimate possession of it was, to the end of the struggle, a matter of doubt. The old Northwest, as yet unpeopled, was still claimed, under their charters, by the seaboard colonies. Eastern Louisiana was

[13]The chief centers of French settlement were Vincennes on the Wabash, and Cahokia and Kaskaskia on the Mississippi. The *Cahokia Records* and the *Kaskaskia Records* of the era of the Revolution have been edited by C. W. Alvord, but the material relating to Vincennes has never been satisfactorily arranged.

[14]Van Tyne. *American Revolution*, 23.

held under the same title, and with less contradiction, by Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia. The Floridas on the south, like Canada on the north, formed a colony, distinct in character and government.[15]

Beyond the Mississippi stretched the unexplored domains of Spanish Louisiana. Only a few years before, it had been the pride of the French colonial empire, but had since been ceded to Spain as compensation for her losses in the Seven Years' war. New Orleans was its most important post, and controlled the commerce of the Mississippi. Other Spanish villages were scattered up the river as far as St. Louis, which had become a refuge for the French who desired to escape the rule of the British across the river. It was the natural outlet for the trade of the Illinois country and had become a serious menace to British influence in that region. So strong were the French in this region, that, in 1769, the commander of Fort de Chartres complained that, in spite of all the efforts of British traders, backed by their country's soldiers, they carried off all the trade, and influenced the Indians against the English to such an extent as to threaten another Indian war.[16]

[15]The population of West Florida was largely French and Spanish, and was held in subjection by powerful garrisons of English troops. In addition there was a considerable number of English traders along the Mississippi. The chief centers of British influence were Pensacola, Mobile, and Natchez. Hamilton, *Colonial Mobile.*

[16]"Notwithstanding the immense sums spent on taking post at Ft. de Chartes, and the length of time we are said to be in possession of the Illinois, the French still carry away all the trade . . . . . They go up our rivers, introduce French manufactures in the Country, and influence the Savages against us . . . . . by which means, unless these parts are established as represented, we shall soon be embroiled in another general Indian War." Lt. Col. Wilkins, commander at Fort de Chartres, to the secretary of war. December 5, 1769. *(Colonial Office 5,* 88, p 175.) The Proclamation of 1763 was not able to stop the Pontiac War, and the Treaty of Fort Stanwix in 1768 did not allay all discontent among the Indians. It was only when the Revolution broke out that the Indians took the side of the English as less dangerous to their interests than the Americans.

Altho the French people still possessed an active interest in their ancient empire, their rulers had given up all thought of regaining it. Louis XV regarded New France and Louisiana as irretrievably lost, and wished to oppose Great Britain with the old system of continental alliances, and there were many to support this view.[17] Altho there is no evidence that Choiseul aimed at the restoration of the French empire in the New World, it is apparent that he did regard America as the most easy and most natural ground on which to work out the humiliation of the ancient rival of the House of Bourbon. With the British in command of the seas he looked to America as the battle ground on which to dispute this supremacy. He was not alone in realizing the dangers of dissension within the British Empire,[18] but the blindness of George III in provoking war aroused in his mind the greatest astonishment.[19]

Choiseul was convinced also that the terms of the Treaty of Paris meant revolution in America, and he resolved to keep himself informed regarding conditions there. Secret agents were sent into the English colonies with

[17]Perkins, *France in the American Revolution*, 20. I have looked through the documents in the French archives but I find no mention by a responsible member of the government of any wish to regain the old dominions of France, altho there are several memorials presented to the ministry at various times which urged the retrocession of Louisiana or at least a French protectorate over it. (See p. 17, note 26.) It is probable that public opinion would have favored this action. The *Memoire sur la Louisiane par Vergennes* which advocated the retrocession of both Louisiana and Canada is undoubtedly a forgery. See p. 30, note 11.

[18]Vergennes told Stormount, the British ambassador to Paris: "I was at Constantinople when the last peace was made. When I heard the conditions I told several of my friends there, that I was persuaded it would not be long before England would have reason to repent of having removed the only check that could keep the Colonies in awe." Stormount to Rochford, October 31, 1775. (*F. O., France*, 542, no. 19, Stevens, *Facsimiles*, XIII, 306; Circourt, III, 1.)

[19]Wharton, *Dip Cor.*, I, 371, note.

instructions to report every indication of discontent,[20] and even French naval officers in American waters described conditions for the eager ears of the French minister.[21] The writings of prominent Americans and even the sermons of New England ministers were carefully searched for evidences of disaffection, and American merchants in French ports were interviewed in regard to the attitude of the colonists.[22] London, too, furnished the latest intelligence. In the French archives are bundles of reports concerning America, gathered from every source.

Choiseul did not limit his interest to the English colonies, but gave attention as well to the old French provinces of Canada and Louisiana. The French Canadians, however, were well satisfied with British rule and not at all disposed to rebellion.[23] Louisiana, on the other hand, was a hotbed of discontent and disaffection; this was systematically reported to Paris, and the discontented element probably received encouragement from Choiseul's agents. The knowledge of the cruelty and tyranny of Spain was public property in France, and led to a strong demand for the retrocession of this province[24] to its former mistress

[20]Kapp, *Life of Kalb,* 43. Choiseul sent over Pontleroy in 1764 on a tour of observation and he returned in 1766. In 1767 Kalb was sent to America to learn the intentions of the people and their needs in case of war. He was instructed to learn the strength of their fortified places, their facility in securing supplies, their plans, the character of their leaders, and any other information likely to prove useful. Kalb made several reports, the first in January, 1768. (Kapp, 46-55.)

[21]See memorial entitled *"D'Estaing propose la liberté de la Louisiane sous le protectorat de la France,"* March 10, 1769. *(Margry Collections, Nou. Acq. Françaises,* 9309, fol. 8.)

[22]Kapp, *Life of Kalb,* 45.

[23]Kalb's report of January 20, 1768, Kalb reported that the French Canadians were no longer in sympathy with the mother country. They were becoming prosperous under British rule and were intermarrying with the English population. Kapp, *Kalb,* 67.

[24]The cruelties of the Spanish governor, O'Reilly, who became governor of New Orleans in 1769, aroused great indignation in France and there were urgent demands that France interfere. Gayarré, *Louisiana.*

or at least that it be declared under the protection of the government at Versailles. The French archives during this period contain many documents on the subject, of which the most important one is generally attributed to Admiral D'Estaing.[25] The author describes in glowing terms the climate and resources of Louisiana which, he declares, extends as far as "the Ilinois, and is capable of supporting an immense population." The Mississippi Valley, argues the author, is of vital importance to Spain for the protection of Mexico. How could this barrier be made more effective? Not by reducing it to the full control of Spain, under whose government the population would remain scattered and restless, and ready to submit to the more liberal rule of Great Britain. A better way, insists the writer, is to allow the people of Louisiana to govern themselves under the protection of France and Spain. The reason for this revolutionary proposal is explained in the memorial. The example of a free republic in the Mississippi Valley, it was argued, would encourage the English colonists to revolt, and France could then enjoy the commerce of all America without the expense of maintaining colonies. Furthermore, while Louisiana was dissatisfied she would offer no opposition to British aggression, but if granted her

[25] *"D'Estaing propose la liberté de la Louisiane sous le protectorat de la France." (Margry Collections, Nou. Acq. Françaises,* 9309, 8) Other documents on this subject are the *"Memoir de Poterat tendant a mettre la Louisiane sous le protectorat français." ..(Memoires et Documents, Aff. Etr. Fond Divers, Amerique,* II.) There is also a letter from a M. Francis, dated October 21, 1763, describing Lord Egremont's plans regarding "Accadia, Canada, and the Floridas." *(Arc. Aff. Etr. Angleterre,* 481, fol. 103.) This name suggests the J. B. Lazarus Francis, the agent of Beaumarchais in America. There is also a letter from a M. de Neyon, a French officer at Fort de Chartres, to Loftus, conceding to the English permanent possession of the Illinois. *(Arc. Col. Louisiane,* 44, div. 2 18b.) There was also mention of a M. Larnier who was in the Illinois in the early seventies. *(Arc. Aff. Etr. Angleterre,* 501, fol. 320.) Another important document is a *"Memoir que regarde la Louisiane,"* dated 1763. *(Arc. Col. Louisiane,* vol. 43.)

independence she would make every effort to preserve it.[26]

The many suggestions regarding Louisiana probably received consideration from Choiseul, altho it is unlikely that they were officially discussed in the cabinet.[27] The mercurial mind of the French minister had already

[26]L'Evenement singulier; . . . . arrive à la Nouvelle Orleans deviendra s'il est saisé legerme heureux de ( ) administration de l'Empire Britannique aider l'Amérique Sepentrionale a s'en separer accroitre le desire qu' elle parait en avoir, montrer a ses colons qui veulent être libres qu'euse; leur faire voir sous leurs yeux le spectacle intérressant de deux Potentates qui pardonnent, qui protegent, et qui daignent de concert proferer le mot de paussant de liberté. ce serait faire plus que econguerir une des provinces anglaises de l'Amèrique. Le choc de la guerre ne servirait qu à rafermer les liens qui attachent encore ces countreés à la metropole, c'est à l'example ( ) bonheur à les entrainer vers le but ou elles tenent dêja. c'est par la confiance qu'elles oseront plus et plus tot: mais cette confiance en des Monarques que des préjuges populaires leurs ont fait regarder comme des despottes, ne peut s'acquirer que par une preuve incontestable, il n'en peut exister une plus persuasions que la liberté de la Louisiane . . . . . les citoyens de la Louisiane gouvernir par eux mêmes mais avec le(s) lois donneés par la parmission de l'Espagne et sous la guarentee de la France, ne dependraient que de leur intelligences pour tout ce que regardirait les details de la justice de l'administration, et de l'accroissement qui devrait être le point de vue unique de leur regime, mais des commissaires soutenus, et authorises par les deux puissances veuleraient a ce que l'ambition des particulaires ne causera point de secousses dans les fibres naissants de cette petite republique . . . . Les colons naturalises Espagnoles par la cession, et français par leur origin, conserve les droits de commerce . . . . un territoire salubre dont la population est presque aussi prompte que cette du Canada, fertile dans tous les genus commestibles, qui s'etend jusqu'aux Illinois . . . . C'est je repete, armer leur Amérique contre eux mêmes." *D'Estaing propose la liberté de la Louisiane sous le protectorat de la France,* Versailles March 10, 1769. *(Margry Collections, Nou. Acq. Françaises,* 9309, 8.) Bancroft gives extracts from this document but attributes it to Choiseul. *United States,* V, 339.

[27]I can find no traces in the French archives of a cabinet minute relating to the West during this period. Bancroft says that Choiseul sent the memorial described above (note 26) to Du Chatêlet. the French minister to London. *(United States,* V. 339.) He is probably right, altho Choiseul may not have intended the memorial to express his own opinions. Bancroft also quotes Chatêlet as approving the ideas of the memorial. *(Ibid.,* 340.) It is probable that the whole question excited lively interest at the French court altho no official action was taken.

turned to other schemes for the humiliation of England, and the old king Louis XV. was sunk too deep in debauchery and disease to care.[28] Choiseul's investigations had piled up a mass of documents, but they did not result in a definite policy either to promote insurrection in America, or to leave the colonies alone.[29] The vacillating minister dropped his schemes before they could bear fruit, and ere a successor could develop anew the policies of intervention, the War of Independence was well under way; and the course of events had carried it beyond the control of French diplomacy.

With the abandonment of French activities in the Mississippi Valley, the whole territory was left to the English and Spanish. Spain held the west bank of the river and within her domains were the important posts of St. Louis and New Orleans, the latter of which gave her control of the river's mouth. On the lower Mississippi the British balanced the strategic positions of Mobile and Natchez against New Orleans, but in all the wilderness north as far as the Illinois posts of Kaskaskia and Cahokia there was not a single British stronghold. In the years between 1763 and 1774 the population of Spanish Louisiana increased at the expense of the Illinois country.[30] British

[28]Perkins, *France in the American Revolution*, 32..

[29]In his efforts to conquer Corsica, Choiseul lost sight of America. When Kalb returned from his mission to America, Choiseul refused to see him and declared that he wanted to hear nothing more of America. Soon after this, however, he announced that in retaliation for English aid to the Corsicans, he would assist the Americans. (Kapp, *Kalb*, 72.) He was soon threatening to involve France in war with Great Britain over the Spanish claim to the Falkland Islands, when he was dismissed. Perkins, *France in the American Revolution*, 31.

[30]Immediately after the treaty of 1763 many of the French living in the Illinois country crossed to the western bank of the Mississippi. Professor Alvord believes that as soon as the British actually occupied the country this migration stopped. *Cahokia Records*, Introduction. (Illinois Historical Collections, II.) In 1787 an investigation by Congress showed fewer than 600 inhabitants in the Illinois, of whom 50 were Americans, about 250 slaves, and the remainder French and English. *Journals of the Continental Congress* (MSS.), XLVIII, fols. 48-52, 165. Bancroft gives the population of the Illinois in 1768 as 1358. *United States*, III, 319.

traders, however, came with British soldiers to the old Northwest and entered into competition with the French and Spanish across the river. At first the newcomers were helpless against the skill and influence of their rivals,[31] but within a few years they controlled the trade of the Illinois.[32]

During the years before the outbreak of the American Revolution the British and Spanish along the Mississippi were mutually distrustful. There were many points of dispute between the two nations, and it seemed that at any time there might be an outbreak of war.[33] Both sides saw the importance of the Mississippi Valley, and both made preparations to preserve and, if possible, to extend their influence there. The Spaniards strengthened their defenses along the west bank of the river, and the British, ever alert, prepared to checkmate them.[34] Orders were given that, in the event of war, British troops should at once seize New

[31]Col. Wilkins to secretary of war, December 5, 1769. See above, p. 13, note 16.

[32]Gayarré, *History of Louisiana,* III, 106. In 1783 the Canadian merchants protested vigorously against the surrender of the Northwest Territory because "it cuts off all the trading Posts, and almost all the Indian Nations, the trade with whom was the grand object of the Commercial Intercourse between Great Britain and the Province of Quebec." *Representation of Canada Merchants to Lord Shelburne,* January 31, 1783. *(Shelburne MSS. in Lansdowne House; E. L. S., 72,* fol. 459. Copy in *Peace Trs.,* Lib of Congress, XIII.) The extent of British trade is shown by the fact that in one month in 1776 the governor of Louisiana captured fifteen British trading vessels. See p. 65. The French archives also contain frequent references to merchants ruined by British competition.

[33]In 1770 there was a dispute between the two countries over the Falkland Islands which threatened war. Perkins, *France in the American Revolution,* 31. In 1774 there was a dispute between Spain and Portugal "de leurs limites sur le Rio St. Pedro et vers l'Uruguay." Doniol *Transcripts Nou. Acqs. Franc.* 6482, 36. France supported Spain, Great Britain Portugal. *Ibid.,* 31, 39.

[34]"The proceedings of the Spaniards in the different Posts they are forming on the Western side of the Mississippi cannot be too narrowly watched." Hillsborough to Gen. Gage, September 28, 1770. *(C. O.* 5, 88, no. 35, fol. 277.)

Orleans and get possession of Louisiana.[35] For several years the two nations preserved an armed peace along the Mississippi. New questions of dispute arose,[36] and at the time of the outbreak of the Revolution, war was still threatening. The court of Madrid, however, was anxious for peace,[37] and, with the beginning of insurrection in the colonies, the British commander felt it safe to withdraw the troops in the Northwest for service in the East.[38] Spain, however, was not satisfied and the disputes between the two countries were allowed to drag on until they led to war.

Events in the East soon directed all eyes toward Boston, but at the same time the importance of the outlying districts increased. The control of the Floridas, of Canada, and of the Mississippi Valley became at once a matter of vital interest, for if they could be brought into rebellion British power in America would receive a staggering blow. In none of these provinces was the population large enough and sufficiently homogeneous to organize an independent revolt, but the American insurgents were anxious to get their assistance. There were many reasons, however, to prevent both the Floridas and Canada from following the lead of the English colonies. In the southern province

[35]Hillsborough to Gage, January 2, 1771. (*C. O.*, 5, 88, no. 89, fol. 1.)

[36]The question of the boundary between the possessions of Spain and Portugal in South America. See note 34.

[37]"S. M. Cath ne m'a pas dit qu'elle desirait une mediation mais vraisemblablement, que si la France d'accord avec l'Angleterre l'offrant a ce Monarque il l'accepterait, car il est certain qu'il desire sincerement le maintien de la paix."—Ossun, French ambassador to Madrid. to Vergennes, December 5, 1774. (Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Franc.*, 6482, 49.) See also p. 8, note 4.

[38]"Lord Dunmore has sent me a provincial major by the name of Conoly, in whom his Lordship puts great Confidence to Impart a Project of raising the People of Detroit and other Settlers in the interior Country. who with the Indians and the two Companys of the 18th Regiment at the Ilinois might make a diversion on the Frontiers of Pensylvania and Virginia . . . . . I will do all I can to promote its success. . . . . I have sent . . . . Lord Dunmore Letters . . . . for Capt. Lord of the 18 th Regiment, ordering him to move the Companys of said Regiment from the Ilinois to Detroit . . . ." Gage to Dartmouth, September 20, 175. (*C. O.* 5, 92, no. 37, fol. 568-569.)

the restless spirits who favored revolt were overawed by the strong garrisons which the British maintained to protect the country from the Indians and Spaniards, while the great mass of the population sympathized with Great Britain. Concerted action with the insurgents was furthermore made impossible by the unexplored wilderness to the north. Under such conditions, the conquest of the Floridas by the Americans was possible only with foreign assistance. Spain, however, had not forgotten her ancient possession of them, and regarded them of the utmost importance in maintaining control of the Gulf of Mexico.[39] Due to these circumstances American projects against the Floridas were destined to prove abortive, and in spite of every effort, these provinces were to serve only as a pawn to tempt the greed of Spain.

In the minds of many Americans, Canada held a place of greater importance than the Floridas, altho there were equally serious difficulties in the way of union. The natives were of alien race, and twelve years before had fought desperately against the men who would now call them brothers. Their difference in religion had only recently been emphasized in the bitter dispute over the *Quebec Act,* and the French Canadians, long accustomed to paternal government, looked with indifference on the New England ideas of liberty. They were well satisfied with the improvements which the English had made in their condition,[40] and the pleas of insurgent agitators found no response in their minds. French civil law was still maintained, and the Roman Catholic religion virtually established,[41] while the annexation of the territory north of the

[39]See p. 80, note 37.

[40]Kalb's report to Choiseul, 1768. Kapp, *Life of Kalb,* 65-70.

[41]For description of the organization of the province of Quebec see Coffin, *"The Province of Quebec and the Early American Revolution.* Kalb wrote in 1768 that the Canadians would not unite with the other colonies in revolt. Kapp, *"Life of Kalb,* 68.

Ohio flattered the pride of the Canadians[42] and gave them a practical monopoly of the fur trade.[43]

The measures favoring the French in Canada aroused, among the English of that province, a spirit of disaffection, which held out to the revolting colonies a promise of union. The governor-general was alarmed at the threatening attitude of the English Canadians and took measures to repress insurrection.[44] The Continental Congress, on the other hand, was anxious to bring all British America under its sway, and in October, 1774, adopted resolutions urging the Canadians to unite with them in opposition to the measures of the British government.[45] In the February following agents of Congress arrived in Montreal, where they held a "meeting of Merchants and most of the English, Scotch, and Irish of Montreal at the Coffee House . . . . and [these] were urged by the New Englanders to send 2 delegates to Congress at Philadelphia."[46] These agents reported that Canada was not in condition to resist attack, that the English population was ready to revolt, and that the French would remain inactive.[47]

Congress, thereupon, determined to send a military expedition against Canada, in the hope of inducing it to

[42]Kingsford, *History of Canada,* V, 251.

[43] . . . . "it [the treaty of 1783] cuts off all the trading Posts and almost all the Indian Nations, the trade with whom was the grand Object of the Commercial Intercourse between Great Britain and the Province of Quebec. . . . . Consequently the whole trade with the Indians must be entirely cut off from the Province of Quebec." Representation of the Canada Merchants to Shelburne, January 31, 1783. *(Shelburne MSS., E. L. S., 72,* fol. 459; copy in *Peace Transcripts,* XIII.)

[44]Carleton, the governor-general of Canada, wrote Dartmouth, January 12, 1775, of "endeavours being made by certain of his Majesty's British subjects to kindle in the Canadians the spirit that reigns in Massachusetts, and seems to run through most of the other colonies." *P. R. O., Col. Cor., Quebec,* 11, 24. Quoted in Stephens, *Chronological Index.*

[45]*Journal of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), 1, 62.

[46]Extract of letter from Montreal, April 6, 1775. *(P. R. O., Col. Cor Quebec,* 11, 48; quoted in Stephens, *Chronological Index.)*

[47]Kingsford, *Canada,* V, 251.

join the rebellion. Washington agreed to this, and believed also that the movement would be of strategic value.[48] To this expedition he gave much time and thought, for he felt that it would have a "decisive effect on the public interests." If the Continentals should conquer Canada, he was certain that the plans of the British ministry would fail.[49]

Governor Carleton was greatly alarmed at these efforts of Congress to win over the Canadians. He admitted that the Americans were "only too successful" in their efforts "to debauch the minds of the Canadians and Indians." He complained that the people in general seemed "to think it their interest that these Wretches should become Masters of the Country, though the Gentlemen, Clergy and most of the Bourgeois, have manifested great Zeal and Fidelity for the King's service." Carleton was in despair. He declared that the whole country was "on the eve of being overrun and subdued."[50] Gage was more optimistic, however, and felt that, unless the whole body of the

[48]Washington, *Works* (Ford ed.), III, 238.

[49]*Ibid.*, III, 120. The colonial assemblies had early sent detached expeditions towards Canada, and Washington resolved to bring these together in a systematic invasion. On August 20, 1775, he wrote to General Schuyler communicating a plan of attack by way of the Kennebec River to Quebec. He hoped this would make a diversion and prevent General Carleton from defending both Montreal and Quebec. *(Ibid.*, 124.) He instructed Arnold to do all in his power to win the good will of the Canadians "by just and honorable conduct," and to treat them and the Indians as friends and brothers. He, himself, issued a proclamation urging the Canadians to join in the revolt. *(Ibid.*, 126.) He also suggested to Congress that the Canadians be invited to send delegates to that body. *(Ibid.*, 238.) In accord with Washington's ideas Montgomery urged the Canadians to form "a provincial convention to maintain the civil and religious rights of the colonies." *(Ibid.*, 239.)

[50]Carleton to Gage, Montreal, September 16, 1775. Carleton went on to state: " . . . . I had great hopes of holding out for the Year, tho' I seemed abandoned by all the Earth, had the Savages remained firm; I can not blame these poor People for securing themselves, as they see Multitudes of the Enemy at Hand [and] no succor from any Part. . . . ." *C. O.* 5, 92, fol. 673; copy in *Bt. Trs.*, 123, fol. 405, L. C.

Canadians went over to the provincials, the American expedition must fail.[51]

News of the fall of Montreal further alarmed the British commanders and aroused a corresponding elation among the Americans. Many of the Canadians went over to the side of the insurgents, and for a time it seemed that the whole province would take the side of Congress. In the revolting colonies great importance was attached to the expedition against Quebec, and Washington wrote that, upon its outcome, would probably depend the issue of the whole war.[52] The failure of Montgomery and Arnold was a bitter disappointment to him, and he felt that the colonies had lost a great chance for a speedy and decisive victory, and that now the struggle must be long and bloody.[53] For a time, however, he did not give up hope of affecting the conquest of Canada,[54] but military events in other colonies became more serious, the American forces were withdrawn, and the province of Quebec was lost to the Revolution.

Only the West, then, offered opportunities for expansion. In this direction population naturally flowed, and, altho without legal sanction, frontiersmen had already spread over the region south of the Ohio, and established settlements in its rich valleys. To these settlements, as well as to the territory north of the river, the colonists laid claim by right of their charters. [55] Against these charters was the legal force of various Indian treaties and the Quebec Act. Furthermore, in the Northwest the British held a quasi-military authority which the colonists were in no position to dispute. The country south of the Ohio, however, did not offer so difficult a problem. The British had no military control within its limits, and there was no one to dispute the claims of Virginia and North Carolina.

[51]Gage to Dartmouth, September 20, 1775. (*C. O. 5, 92*, no. 38, fol. 571.)

[52]Washington, *Works* (Ford ed.), III, 381.

[53]*Ibid., IV*, 47, 103, 108, 174.

[54]*Ibid., IV*, 195, 218.

[55]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVIII, 939.

Altho settlers were pouring in, the outbreak of war had, as yet, prevented the organization of a government.[56] It was not long, however, until the inhabitants of Tennessee and Kentucky demanded some organization, and established the Watauga Association and the County of Kentucky.

During the early days of the Revolution, the West received scant consideration from the leaders of the rebellion. Congress concentrated its armies in the East and the West was left to shift for itself. In no sense, however, did the colonies abandon their claims to the valley of the Mississippi. Washington, Franklin, and Jay all maintained the right of the Americans to the West,[57] and there probably could be found no one among the patriots who did not regard the back countries as a part of the colonial dominions, and this very unanimity doubtless forestalled discussion.

The British, however, were the first to see the importance of the West in the war and were quick to take advantage of it. General Gage planned to raise the settlers of the Northwest to assist the Indians and some regular troops from the Illinois in an attack on the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia.[58] Supplies were to come from Pensacola up the Mississippi and Ohio, and with the cooperation of Lord Dunmore in Virginia, Gage planned to cut the colonies in two and restrict the area of rebellion to New England. This plan was never carried out, but the

[56]See Alden, *New Governments West of the Alleghanies before 1780;* Turner, *Western State Making during the Revolution,* in *American Historical Review,* I, 20, 70.

[57]In July, 1775, Franklin drew up a plan of confederation to include, not only the thirteen colonies and Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas, but the West Indies and Ireland as well. (*Works* (Smyth ed.), VI, 425.) This plan was presented to Congress but never acted upon. Altho no specific mention was made of the West it is evident that Franklin thought it unnecessary to discuss it. Jay declared that he had long believed that Congress should grant Spain the navigation of the Mississippi below "our territories." *History of the Spanish Mission;* Jay, *Life of Jay,* I, 100.

[58]Gage to Dartmouth. See p. 20, note 38.

British were successful in keeping Detroit and the posts along the Great Lakes and the Mississippi, which, with the control of the Floridas, enabled them to threaten continually the vast regions between.

Thus conditions at the outbreak of the war limited the area of rebellion and threw the conquests of the Seven Years' War once more into the jackpot of world diplomacy. These conquests were now divided into four zones, each of which presented a distinct problem. The Floridas were definitely included within the scope of Spanish diplomacy, while the claims of Spain and the United States to the territory south of the Ohio made impossible an alliance between these two powers. The old Northwest was of vital interest to the new republic, while Canada, as the last stronghold of British power in America was sure to receive great attention. Each, then, was a distinct issue in the diplomacy of the American Revolution, and the outcome was made still more uncertain by the policy of Vergennes, who, through the humiliation of Britain, was seeking to brighten the prestige of his beloved France.

# CHAPTER II

## VERGENNES AND SPANISH DIPLOMACY

The accession of Louis XVI to the throne of France gave renewed life to the worn out diplomacy of Versailles. The nominal head of the new ministry was the aged and dissolute Maurepas, but the real leadership fell to the astute and energetic minister of foreign affairs, Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes.[1] Vergennes had spent his active life in diplomacy and was called to the foreign office from an embassy to the court of Sweden. He had none of the characteristics of the supple Choiseul, but was a man of resolute purpose, blunt and direct in speech, and cold and haughty in manner. His temper, when once aroused, was violent; but his anger was soon appeased; and he was, in general, patient and courteous. Particularly noticeable was his lack of that vivacity and optimism so general among Frenchmen; and his appearance gave the impression of one laboring under a load of responsibility and anxiety. He was, however, a man of clear understanding and definite aims, and one who would pursue unhesitatingly to the end a policy upon which he had once decided.[2] Altho not a great man, he had an infinite capacity for taking pains, and would often labor at his desk from early in the morning till late at night. He has been described, and perhaps justly, as having for his trump cards "subtlety,

[1]Turgot was the only serious rival of Vergennes and the latter always carried his point over the advice of the minister of finance. Doniol has the same view of the position of Vergennes. *Histoire,* I, 249.

[2]"Whether the policy which he [Vergennes] pursued was the boldest which he could have adopted no man now possesses the means of judging. . . . . But having adopted it, it is but justice to this minister to admit that he pursued it with singular equanimity, firmness, and temper." *North American Review,* XXXIII, 471. Wharton attributes this article to Edward Everett. *Dip. Cor.,* I, 243 et seq.

wiliness, cleverness, and sagacity,"[3] but, at the same time his honesty and loyalty were beyond suspicion. Narrow in outlook, his one passion was patriotism, and he gave to France a life of single-hearted devotion. His was not a lovable character, but his uprightness and ability gained for him the respect and friendship of such opposite characters as the frivolous Marie Antoinette, the dull Louis XVI, and the shrewd and philosophic Franklin.[4]

When Vergennes took up the slackened reins of power, France was reduced to impotency in the councils of Europe. The new minister saw clearly the depths to which his country had fallen and felt keenly her degradation. "The deplorable peace of 1763," he informed his king, "the partition of Poland, and in fact, other causes equally disastrous, have struck the greatest blows to the respect for your crown."[5] Great Britain, he complained, had gained most from the misfortunes of France, for she had conquered Canada, Louisiana, and other important possessions of the Bourbons. To retrieve the fallen glory of his country he would strike at the British Empire. To restore French prestige through the humiliation of England was the keystone of his policy, and it was this which led him to suggest that encouragement and aid be given the British colonies in their opposition to the mother country.[6] It was this idea, also, which led him in 1778 to recognize the inde-

[3]Hale, *Franklin in France,* II, 80.

[4]This characterization of Vergennes is drawn from his letters and despatches. Franklin had a high appreciation of his character. In 1781 he wrote of "the sincerity of this upright minister, who never promised to me any thing which he did not punctually perform". *(Works* (Smith ed.), VIII, 302.) At the news of Vergennes's death Franklin again wrote: "So wise and good a man, taken away from the station he filled is a great loss, not only to France but to Europe in general, to America and to mankind." *(Ibid.,* IX, 575.) For a common idea of Vergennes see Jay's characterization in *Magazine of American History,* XIII, 31.

[5]Translation. Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 13.

[6]Hale declared that Vergennes's object was to weaken Great Britain, "to make good, in a measure, the territorial losses of the Seven Years' War, that is Canada . . . ." *Franklin in France,* II, 44.

pendence of the United States, and at the same time to make every effort to keep the alliance and friendship of Spain.[7]

From accounts of conditions in America, Vergennes was sure that a rupture was at hand. He was not satisfied with De Kalb's report; and, to make his information more exact, he determined to send over an agent of his own.[8] His choice fell upon a gentleman named Bonvouloir who was sent secretly and with no credentials. Vergennes recognized the jealousy felt by the colonists of French influence and their fear of aggression, and he instructed his agent to inform them that France had no designs on Canada.[9] This promise Vergennes doubtless made in good faith, for he cared nothing for wide colonial dominions which would bring only trouble and expense.[10] His chief interest was in small and productive colonies and in advantageously situated commercial ports.

The revolt of the American colonies gave to the New World an international importance such as it had never before possessed. Always before, it had been a minor factor in great European struggles, but now it became the center of a new conflict, fought out on different lines. In previous

[7]Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 13.

[8]"Quoiqu'on ait voulu faire honneur a M. le duc de Choiseul d'avoir preparé cette revolution je dois dire avec verité sans pretendre enlever rien a sa gloire qu'il n'y a en aucune part. . . . Bn de Kalb qui apres la paix avait voiagé de son ordre dans les Colonies angloises n'avoit d'autre commission qui de reconnoitre les dispositions de ces peuples. La correspondance qui j'ai Sous ma main n'announce pas même des découvertes fort importantes." Vergennes (in his hand) to the king, 1776. Vergennes went on to explain that new conditions had arisen and it was necessary to have some one on the ground to report new developments. *Aff. Etr. France,* 446, no. 33, Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Francs.,* 6494, 55.

[9]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.,* I, 333.

[10]"La France a des colonies dans la proportion qui convient a sa population et son industrie. Plus seroit une charge plus tost q un benefice. Si la perte du Canada lui a été sensible elle doit la moins regretter depuis que labandon quelle a été obligée d en faire est devenu le signal de revolte des provinces angloises sur le continent." Vergennes to Aranda, April 26, 1777. *(Esp.,* 584, no. 40.)

wars it was merely a question of whether Great Britain or the Bourbons should extend a colonial empire, but now the matter in hand was the birth of a new nation. Defeated in the past in every struggle with a united Britain, France now saw in a divided empire her opportunity for vengeance. It was no longer a contest over Canada and Louisiana; the reconquest of these did not enter the dreams of Vergennes; he looked for triumph over Great Britain in the destruction of her commerce, in the dismemberment of her empire, and above all, in forming her richest provinces into a new nation that would be forever a check on British aggression.

The outbreak of open war in America formed a crisis in the diplomacy of France. The moment had come for which Choiseul had waited in vain and towards which Vergennes had pointed his policy. The report of battle on the commons of Lexington warned him that the time for action was at hand. While it was clear that France had a great interest in the revolt, there still arose in the mind of Vergennes many questions. Would the colonies declare their independence? If they did, would they fight with determination to maintain their declaration? Should France offer them aid; and, if so, what should be its character? Would Spain join in a war to free rebellious colonies? What recompense should the two crowns expect for their assistance? With these questions in mind Vergennes began to formulate a definite policy.

In two memorials written at this time may be read the fundamentals of his decision to which he clung throughout the succeeding years.[11] The first is headed "Reflexions

[11]There is a third memorial entitled *"Memoire Historique et Politique sur la Louisiane"* par M. de Vergennes, ministre de Louis XVI, and published in Paris in 1802. This memorial declared that the war then going on in America was of vital interest to France and Spain, and that the two countries ought to unite on a policy regarding the struggle. The Americans, if successful, were likely to seize the American possessions of Spain and become the dominant power on the continent. The only means of preventing this, continued the memoir, was to restore Canada, Louisiana, and Eastern Louisiana to France. The Indians and Canadians would

Sur la Conduite qu'il convient a la france de tenir a l'egard des Colonies Angloisses, par M. Gerard de Rayneval," and was prepared in the latter part of 1775 for the use of Vergennes.[12] The second bears the title "Considerations sur l'affaire des Colonies anglois de l'Amerique," and was drawn up by Vergennes himself.[13] The first of these describes in general terms conditions in America, and the interest of France in the struggle; the second sets forth,

then be able to balance the ambition of the Americans. Louisiana was useless to Spain, it argued, and that power ought to be glad to surrender it to France in return for a guarantee of her other possessions. It was also necessary for the protection of French commerce. Whatever the outcome of the war between England and her colonies, reasoned the memorial, Europe must intervene. In that case France would be in position to reclaim her ancient possessions in Canada.

This memorial has received importance from the use Professor Turner makes of it in his "Policy of France toward the Mississippi Valley in the Period of Washington and Adams." *(Am. Hist. Rev.,* X, 249.) There is good reason to believe, however, that the whole memoir is a forgery. Turner admits that there was some suspicion of it, but attempts to establish its authenticity by the assertion that "the subsequent actions of Vergennes are entirely consistent with the view that he was the author." He attempts to prove this assertion by reference to Oswald's letter to Shelburne of September 17, 1782, regarding Rayneval's mission to London, and by Godoy's declaration in his memoirs that Vergennes tried "to induce Spain . . . . to give to France her ancient colony." The publication of Rayneval's report to Vergennes (Doniol, *Histoire,* V, 135) shows that his mission had nothing to do with the western territories. Godoy's account can not be accepted as decisive. During the Revolution he was but a child and he was hardly more than a youth when he assumed office in 1792. He could have had no first hand information of any such attempt as he describes. He did not publish his memoirs until many years later (1832) when his memory could not have been accurate and he probably confused some French efforts after the Revolution to obtain Louisiana with the name of Vergennes. As will be shown in the course of this study, the policy laid down in this memoir was not in accord with the policy of Vergennes as stated in his authentic papers. He made no attempt

[12]In hand of Rayneval. (*Etats-Unis, Memoires et Documents,* I, no. 4, fol. 59; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XIII, 1310; Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 243 et seq.)

[13]Dated March 12, 1776. (*Etats-Unis, Memoires et Documents,* I, no. 9; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XIII, 1316; Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 278 et seq.)

in detail, the confused state of English politics, and argues for a policy unfriendly to Great Britain.

Vergennes and his chief assistant were alike convinced that the rebellious colonies would declare their independence; but the position France should take offered many problems, for a move in any direction was threatened with danger. They were willing to allow both combatants to exhaust themselves without offering any interference, but they foresaw great hazards from a consistent policy of non-intervention. Both declared that, whatever the outcome of the war in America, it would surely lead to another struggle between the Bourbon powers and Great Britain. If the latter power should conquer the insurgents, they argued, she would seek indemnity for her expenses in an attack on the colonies of France and Spain; if defeated, she would but have an additional motive to cover the humiliation by a blow at her ancient rivals. The Bourbon powers could not hope to save themselves by maintaining their neutrality, for no matter how carefully they abstained from interference in the war, the British would still accuse them of aiding the rebels, and use this as a pre-

to obtain territory in America and often disclaimed even to Louis XVI any desires in that direction.

There is other evidence of forgery. The style is not that of Vergennes. Page after page is taken up with historical and geographical details of which we find little in the authentic papers of Vergennes, and there is no part that bears the ear marks of a state paper. The paper also shows an ignorance of political and geographical conditions during the Revolution which can not be attributed to Vergennes. The plainest example is found on page 26 of the memoir. It states that the English will soon get possession of Louisiana and that then "Florida will fall of itself." Vergennes frequently discussed the question of Florida but he never committed the mistake of supposing that it belonged to Spain during the period of the Revolution.

The circumstances of the publication of the memoir are suspicious. In the years from 1800 to 1803 Napoleon was concerned with Louisiana, and the publication of this supposed work of Vergennes would help to justify his conduct in the eyes of the world. On no ground can the authenticity of this memoir be accepted.

text for attack. No faith could be placed in the guarantees of Great Britain, for, declared Vergennes: "L'experience n'a que trop prouvé quils croient juste et honorable tout quils regardent comme advantageux à leur nation et destructif pour ses rivaux." Vergennes went on to state that there was already talk in England of a popular war against France to allay domestic disputes and extinguish the national debt. France, he declared, had little to fear from an independent republic in the New World, for it would be too exhausted to attempt any aggression for years, and its very organization as a republic would discourage the spirit of conquest, while its people, devoted to industry and commerce, would see the need of peace.

Rayneval urged, moreover, that his country had much to gain from an independent America, for not only would it weaken Great Britain but also increase proportionately the power of France. England's commerce would suffer an irreparable blow, and that of France would increase in importance. Rayneval thought the opportunity favorable also for France to recover some of her lost American possessions, particularly the fisheries of Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence.[14] In regard to the restoration of the ancient French empire, he merely remarked: "On ne parle pas du Canada."

No plan that Rayneval may have had for the recovery of New France received any encouragement from Vergennes, altho such a scheme was not contrary to the Bourbon traditions. He did not believe that a French empire in America was again possible; and, if it were possible, he argued, France had already enough colonies for her resources and should

[14]In discussing the advantages to France of aiding the Americans Rayneval states:—"elle nous presente comme très probable le recouvrement d'une partie des possessions que les anglois nous ont enlevés en Amérique comme la pêche de terre-neuve, et du golfe de St Laurent, l'Isle Royale &." Stevens, *Facsimiles*, XIII, 1310. Doniol writes instead of "Pêche de terre-neuve," "pêche de terre." *Histoire*, I, 244.

not seek more.[15] A course of aggrandizement in America would arouse the fears of the colonists and they might return gladly to their former allegiance. The suggestion of commercial advantages he passed over likewise without consideration and gave his whole attention to the lowering of English prestige. He would prepare for war and at the right moment strike a decisive blow strong enough to reduce England to the rank of a second class power, and destroy the empire which she had built up with so much "arrogance and injustice."

Vergennes did not think the time was yet ripe for intervention. The warring powers should first be allowed to exhaust themselves and not until the colonies declared their independence should France intervene, for it was not in accord with the king's dignity to ally himself with insurgents. On the other hand France could not delay too long, for there was always the possibility of a reconciliation or sudden collapse of the revolt. Vergennes felt it would be well to encourage the insurgents "par quelques faveurs

[15]"Au pis aller la crainte d une guerre malheureuse qui finiroit par remettre la France en possession du Canada seroit le pouventail le plus certain pour l'Amerique ou le voisinage de notre religion et notre gouvernment est extremement aprehende." Vergennes to Ossun, August 7, 1775 (*Esp.*, 575, no. 15.) See also Vergennes to Guines of same date. (Doniol, *Histoire*, I, 155.) Vergennes wrote to Aranda, March 11, 1777, that since the two crowns were content with their possessions and not ambitious for new conquests, "reste donc celui de cooperer a la foiblessement de la puissance dont elles pourvient redouter la (c) croissement et ( ) quelle seroit tentee d'un faire." (*Esp.*, 583, no. 155.) A month later he expressed the same idea. (*Ibid.*, 584, no. 21.) Again he wrote: "Sa Mte n hesite pas a declarer quelle ne connoit en Amèrique coe en Europe aucun objects asses seduisant d'acquisition pour compensir a ses yeux les hazards, les calamities et l'epuisement resultans dune guerre. La France a des colonies dans la proportion qui convient a sa population et son industrie. Plus seroit une charge plus [tost] q'un benefice." Vergennes to Aranda, April 26, 1777. (*Esp.*, 584, no. 40.) In none of his despatches does Vergennes admit any intention to obtain territorial gains in the New World; but he frequently disclaims any such object. The decadence of Spain and the dangers of Great Britain were, in his day, striking proof of the folly of colonies.

secretes et par des esperances vagues" until they should declare their independence and the moment had come for intervention. He would also conciliate the British and lull their suspicions so they would not fear to embark on an expensive campaign; but France must not be too humble for the "Anglais ne respect que ceux qui peuvent se faire craindre."

This was the program of Vergennes which he consistently maintained in the face of all obstacles. He was not animated by any feelings of sympathy for the "patriot cause," altho his hatred of England doubtless inspired a kindlier feeling for the Americans than he would have entertained otherwise. Of far greater propelling power was his desire to humiliate the old enemy of France. He would not seek a pretext for war. It was enough that Great Britain was dangerous, the natural enemy of France, "avide, injuste, et de mauvaise foi," and that she had always sought every means to injure the House of Bourbon. Should not France then seize this opportunity to enfeeble her rival? The humiliation of England; the prestige of France; such was the policy of Vergennes.[16] He did not

[16]This memoir of Vergennes is especially important as forming the basis of his whole policy regarding the interests of France. Doniol says of the "Reflexions": "Cette piece était a vrai dire un programme. . . . . Le ministre etait désormais fixé a ce programme, et il devait lêtre avec le conseiller veritable du roi le chef du cabinet. Le cours des choses on le verra n'y changer a presque rien." *Histoire,* I, 249.

Vergennes submitted his memoir to Maurepas, Turgot, and St. Germain, all members of the king's cabinet, and asked for their opinion. (Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 279.) St. Germain replied three days later and advised getting ready for war. Turgot's answer was not ready for nearly a month. His paper of April 6 was a careful statement of the finances of France. He pointed out the immense public debt of the monarchy, and the miserable state of her exchequer, and argued that a war would make impossible for a long time to come certain very necessary reforms. The reply of Maurepas is not certainly known, but Doniol attributes to him a short and concise memoir, a copy of which is found in the foreign office. *(Histoire,* I, 286.)

There is no evidence that Vergennes allowed the opinions of his colleagues to affect his policy. The later discussions on the subject do not

seek to build up the old France, overloaded with colonies to drain the life blood of the nation; that could be left to the worn out empire of Spain and to the shattered might of Britain. He would call into being a new nation, which would be a friend and ally of the Bourbon throne, and a constant menace to the maritime power of the British Empire.

In his plans for wrecking England's power, Vergennes counted on the help of Spain. The two powers had long been in alliance and the Spanish court had not been behind that of Versailles in its hatred of the common enemy. At the outbreak of the Revolution the dispute between Spain and Portugal over the boundaries separating Brazil and Uruguay was unsettled and the governments of Versailles and Saint James were involved. The latter was actively supporting Portugal, while the former, in accord with the terms of the *Pacte de Famille,* was giving encouragement to Spain.[17] Vergennes protested his desire to make even stronger the union of the two crowns,[18] and the Spanish minister, Grimaldi, declared in warm terms his gratitude

appear in the records of the foreign office. Vergennes had, by this time, become master of the ministry. Turgot did not long hold the favor of the king, and with his retirement Vergennes was the only man of first rate ability in the cabinet. And Vergennes, when he had once determined on a policy, was of a character to pursue it to the end.

[17]See page 19, note 33. Spain counted on French assistance in case of war, and the British sent a fleet to Buenos Ayres on behalf of Portugal. Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Francs,* 6482, 39, 41. England offered to mediate but Spain refused unless France should also be a mediator. Ossun to Vergennes, December 5, 1774. (*Ibid.,* 49.)

[18] ". . . . je vous prie de ma cooperation et de mon empressement pour le maintien de l'union si desirable entre les deux monarques. Si M. le Mis de Grimaldi se rapelle l'êpoque a laquelle nous residions ensemble auprès du feu roy d'Angleterre peutetre se souviendra t'il que mon attachement a l'union ne date pas du Pacte de Famille qui nous en fait desormais une obligation." Vergennes to Ossun, July 22, 1774. (Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Francs.,* 6482, 6, 19.)

and affection for France.[19] In the communications between the two countries before the middle of 1775, there was much discussion of a war with Great Britain, but there was no suggestion of using the rebellious colonies against the mother country. Vergennes had not fully decided on a course of action regarding America, and the Spanish ministers had no sympathy with rebels. Each nation expressed the greatest sympathy for the other; but the ends that each had in view were entirely different. Vergennes was getting ready to strike hard at Great Britain, while Charles III was seeking anxiously for peace.[20] Remembrance of the humiliating treaty of 1763 stirred the French minister to thoughts of vengeance; it merely frightened the old king at Madrid.

Events in America soon forced the hand of Vergennes. The spread of the revolt made necessary the transport of powerful fleets and large bodies of troops across the Atlantic, and Spanish fears of British aggression changed to certainty.[21] Grimaldi hastened to assure the British ministry of the peaceful intentions of his court, and demanded guarantees that the troops then in America should not be

[19]"Il [Grimaldi] . . . . m'a chargé de nous assurés de sa gratitude et de la constance des sentiments de consideration et d'amitié . . . ." Ossun to Vergennes, December 11, 1774. (Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Francs.*, 6482, 6, 8.)

[20]Ossun, the French minister to Madrid, frequently enlarged on the anxiety of Charles for peace. See his letter to Vergennes, December 11, 1775. (*Esp.*, 578. no. 70.) Doniol explains the case exactly: *Histoire*, I, 293. See p. 8, note 4.

[21]"Le voisinage quil y a entre les Colonies Angloises de l'Amerique et les possessions l'Espagnoles dans cette parte du Monde ne permit pas de voir sans inquitude tant de forces de Mer et de Terre qui s'y rassemblent, . . . . malgre cela il est notoire que l'Espagne n'a pas fait passer dans cette partie le plus petit transport de Troupes et des Vaisseux . . . ." Spain further demanded assurances that "les dits armamens de l'Angleterre ne subsisteront en Amerique qu'aussi longtemps que l'esprit de revolte des Colonies . . . . et retourneront en droiture en Espagne aussitôt que cet motif aura cessé." Copy in *Esp.*, 575, no. 231. (Aranjuez, April 25, 1775.)

used against the possessions of Spain.[22] The answer to this demand was not satisfactory. Great Britain gave assurances that her intentions were peaceful, but at the same time larger armaments were sent to America, the defences of Gibraltar were increased, and a British fleet was sent to watch the navy of Spain.[23] To add to the terror of the Spanish court, credit was given to the rumor that twenty thousand Russian troops and a large German army were on their way to America.[24]

Fear drove Grimaldi to seek counsel once more from Vergennes. The latter had shown his disapproval of demanding guarantees from Great Britain and he maintained that if France and Spain accepted her assurances they would be bound to remain defenceless, trusting only to the good faith of a treacherous enemy.[25] He denounced the ambitions of the British ministry, which, he declared, had in view a project to end the rebellion by uniting all parties in an attack on the American possessions of the Bourbons.[26] To Charles III he directed a letter particularly designed to arouse Spanish fears. He pointed out British interests

[22] "Vous vous rapelleres aussi les assurances reiteres que je vous ai donneés de l'idée avantageuse et de la parfait confiance que le Roi a dune les vues pacifiques du Gouvernment Anglois. Jajouterais que Sa Mte est toujours dans la meme persuasion." *Esp.*, 575, no. 231.

[23] "M. d'Aranda est allarmé des forces de terre qui les Anglois y font passer." Ossun to Vergennes. *(Esp.*, 576, no. 155; see also Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Francs.*, 6482, 83.)

[24] Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Francs*, 6482, 130, 136, 163.

[25] ".... si nous .... acceptons une declaration rassurante de l'Ange nous nous engageons en quelque maniere a rester tranquilles sur la foi de ses assurances, et il faudra ou renouncer aux precautions qui la prudence conseille pour pourvoir nos possessions d'outre mer de tout ce qui peut necessaire a leur conservation ou s'exposer a des reclamations sans fin toutes les fois que nous ferons la moindre disposition pour leur procurer une surete moins precaire que celle qui peut dependre de la bonne foi des Anglois." Vergennes to Aranda, May 9, 1775. *(Esp.*, 576, no. 20.)

[26] ". . . . nous etions informés dupuis asses longtems M. qui cetoit une opinion asses accreditée dans l'opposition et que cherchoit a rendre populaire que le moyen de faire cesser la guerre de l'Amerique seroit de la declarer aux deux courrones." Vergennes to Ossun, August 7, 1775. *(Esp.*, 575, no. 15.)

in Porto Rico, San Domingo, and in the control of the Isles of the Winds and the Gulf of Mexico, and argued the certainty of an attack upon some of them by the immense British forces then in America.[27]

The arguments of Vergennes were not without avail, altho the Spanish king was still anxious for peace. Grimaldi was at last convinced that Great Britain would use her immense forces in America in an attack upon the Spanish possessions.[28] Preparations were made to strengthen the chief ports on the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico, and the armaments of Spain were greatly increased.[29]

While preparing for hostilities Grimaldi and his master still hoped for peace.[30] They knew that Spain was not ready for war, and had no intention of doing more than provide for the defense of her possessions. It was recognized at both the Bourbon courts that Spain had more to lose in a war with Great Britain than had France.[31] Spanish colonies were widely scattered and

[27]Vergennes to Charles III, August 7, 1775. (*Esp.*, 577, no. 15. Doniol, *Histoire*, I, 125.)

[28]Ossun informed Vergennes that the Spanish feared English aggression, whether the English conquered the Americans or failed. In the first case, they could readily use their large army against the possessions of the two crowns; in the second, they would doubtless use it to make up for their losses by conquering new colonies. October 30, 1775. (*Esp.*, 578, no. 59.) Also November 13, 1775. (*Ibid.*, no. 62.)

[29]The king of Spain informed Ossun that he would send two batallions to Havana and two to Porto Rico to reinforce the garrisons there. Ossun to Vergennes, November 13, 1775. (*Esp.*, 578, no. 62, p. 179.) Grimaldi wrote to Aranda that Spain would continue her preparations with much "chaleur." February 26, 1775. (*Ibid.*, no. 73.) See also Doniol, *Histoire*, I, 161.

[30]Charles said he would maintain peace even at the expense of some sacrifice. Ossun to Vergennes, December 11, 1775. (*Esp.*, 578, no. 70, fol. 395.)

[31]Ossun to Vergennes, December 28, 1775. He gives an account of an interview with the Spanish court in which it was clearly brought out that while France had only a few colonies Spain had a rich empire which was almost defenseless. (*Ibid.*, 578, no. 74, fol. 461.) Grimaldi to Vergennes, November 5, 1775. (*Ibid.*, 582, no. 69, fol. 161.)

defenseless, while the few still left to France were strongly fortified. In the schemes of Vergennes, especially in the establishment of an independent state in America, the court of Charles III could have no interest. While the Spanish government recognized that an independent nation in the New World would be a menace to the British possessions, it did not overlook the danger to its own colonies. It was clear that the power that would be able to check the British in Canada would be formidable to the Spaniards in Louisiana. The interests of Spain could not be realized merely by humiliating Great Britain. She was anxious to recover her ancient possessions, particularly Gibraltar, Minorca, and Jamaica,[32] but could see only danger from an independent nation in the New World.

It became then the task of Vergennes to win the Spanish ministers to his policy. Grimaldi did not have the quality of mind to follow an independent course, and the opposition of the French party at the Spanish court led him to doubt the wisdom of his own reasoning. As a result his actions were timid and vacillating, and the opposition was encouraged to continue its endeavors to bring about war with the British Empire. Again and again Ossun pointed to the vast armaments which Great Britain was sending to America, and as often declared that they would ultimately be turned against the colonies of Spain. He urged that the time had come to weaken England and deprive her of a part of the vast empire through which she was seeking to control the world. The opportunity was at hand, he urged, to ruin her commerce in the Mediterranean, the Levant, and in Africa, and to build up the trade of France and Spain on its ruins.[33] Vergennes found an enthusiastic advocate in Aranda, the Spanish minister to Versailles, who, to his own court, pictured the English as the perpetual enemies of Spain, hostile because of rivalry

[32]Grimaldi to Ossun, October 8, 1776. (*Esp.*, 582, no. 21.)

[33]Memorial handed by Ossun to Grimaldi, July 8, 1776. (*Ibid.*, 581, no. 15, fol. 42.)

in interests, and the difference in the character of their population.[34] In the past, he urged, England had overcome her enemies by a sudden and unexpected attack, and there was good reason to think that she was preparing to do the same again. He was sure that the close of the American war meant an attempt to secure for Great Britain some compensation for her losses by an attack on the possessions of France and Spain. Aranda showed himself particularly anxious for the provinces of San Domingo and Louisiana, which, he asserted, were entirely unprotected.[35]

The arguments of Vergennes and the pleadings of Aranda were not without effect on the wavering mind of Grimaldi, and he began to carry on more vigorously the work of arming his country.[36] Plans were formed once more for an attack on Gibraltar, Jamaica, and other colonies of the British Empire.[37] Grimaldi, however, did not neglect preparations for defending the Spanish dominions. He was particularly worried about San Domingo, which, altho poorly fortified, would be of immense advantage to England, and he urgently besought Vergennes to send troops for its protection.[38]

[34]Translation in *Esp.*, 579, no. 81.

[35]"M. d'Aranda est allarmé des forces immenses de terre que les Anglois y font passer: considere qu'il est a craindre quelque soit l'evenement de la guerre des colonies, que les Anglois ne s'emparent de quelques possessions considerables, espagnoles ou francoises. . . . . M. d'Aranda examine ensuite quelle seroit la conquête la plus aisee et la plus facile que les Anglois pourroient entreprendre il se fixe a la Louisiane et a l'isle St. Domingue, la premiere comme les mettant a portee de s'emparer dans la suite du Mexique; la seconde pouvant leur procurer de grande richesses et augmenter considerablement l'entendue de leur commerce. Cet ambassadeur regarde cette conquête comme infallible si les Anglois l'entreprennent, il suppose que l'Espagne a suffisamment pourvú a la conservation de la Havane de Porto Rico, et des autres Colonies de consequence et il conseille très fort de pourvoir sans delai, a la defense de la Louisiane et de St. Dominque." Ossun to Vergennes, April 25, 1776. *(Ibid.*, 580, no. 57, new 31.)

[36]Grimaldi to Aranda, February 26, 1776. (*Ibid.*, 579, no. 73.) Ossun to Vergennes, August 19, 1776. *(Ibid.)*

[37]*Archives de la Marine*, B4, 30-41.

[38]Ossun to Vergennes, July 1, 1776. (*Esp.*, 581, no. 57.)

The belief that the close of hostilities between England and her colonies meant an attack on the American possessions of Spain gave the United States a new importance in the eyes of that power. Her ministry saw a crisis approaching which, if properly utilized, might mean a vast increase in the Spanish empire. It recommended measures for a vigorous campaign formidable enough to overwhelm the enfeebled state of Britain.[39] It promised a close alliance with France but, at the same time, solicitiously recalled that Spain must suffer the heavier losses in case their plans should miscarry.[40] Grimaldi was convinced that the war in America would soon end and then would come the long dreaded attack. To withstand this onslaught the Bourbon powers must be ready to strike at the critical moment.

The activities of Spain aroused British suspicions and Lord Grantham, the British minister at Madrid, demanded explanations. He assured Grimaldi of the peaceful intentions of his court, and declared that the British armaments were intended only to suppress the revolt in America. He complained that the preparations of Spain and France could be directed only against Great Britain.[41]

Grimaldi was not fully satisfied with Grantham's assurances of good will. He replied that the preparations of the Bourbon powers were made only in self defense and that they desired peace above all things, but he also declared that the armaments of Great Britain were too dangerous to pass by unnoticed.[42] Spain therefore did not

[39]"Que si l'Angelterre est maintenant foible, elle le sera d'avantage dans deux ou trois mois par les pertes, qui lui aura cause la guerre civile". Grimaldi to Ossun, October 8, 1776. *(Esp.*, 582, no. 21.)

[40]"Enfin que dans cette guerre l'Espagne risque infiniment plus que la France en egard a ses vastes et riches possessions." Grimaldi to Ossun, October 8, 1776. *(Ibid.)*

[41]Ossun to Vergennes, November 21, 1776. *(Ibid.*, 582, no. 132, new 106.)

[42]Grimaldi to Aranda, November 29, 1776. (Translation. *Ibid.*, 582, no. 137.)

cease her efforts to strengthen her military position, and it looked as if the Bourbon powers were rapidly drifting into war.[43]

The vacillating Grimaldi was not yet ready to proceed to extremities, but wished to postpone war as long as possible.[44] An attack by the Bourbon powers upon Great Britain, he urged, would produce a reconciliation between the combatants in America, and a combined attack upon the Spanish colonies.[45] On the other hand, he argued, a recognition of the United States would imperil Spanish interests by encouraging revolt among her American possessions. He further suggested that the two powers should plan to begin war early in 1778, but that, in the meanwhile, they should try to reconcile England and her colonies.[46]

The objects of French and Spanish diplomacy were fundamentally different. Vergennes wished to enfeeble Great Britain in order to readjust the balance of power in favor of France. Spain, on the other hand, accepted with resignation her loss of influence in Europe, and her statesmen were looking only to an extension of colonial power. Grimaldi declared that if his country should enter into war with Great Britain, her plans would in no wise concern themselves with the American conflict. The objects of Spanish policy would be, first of all, to conquer Portugal, or at least a part of her dependencies, to destroy British commerce in the Mediterranean, and to reconquer Gibraltar and some of the other lost colonies of the ancient Spanish empire.[47] While Vergennes wished to act in conjunction with the Americans, Grimaldi insisted upon an independent course of conquest. Vergennes wished to raise

[43]Grimaldi urged France to get ready for war. Ossun to Vergennes, November 26, 1776. *(Esp.,* 582, no. 193, new 117.)

[44]Grimaldi suggested that if France would disarm England would doubtless do likewise. Ossun to Vergennes, November 26, 1776. *(Ibid.)*

[45]Grimaldi to Aranda, February 4, 1777. *(Ibid.,* 583, no. 70.)

[46]*Memoir of the Court of Spain,* July, 1776. (*Ibid.,* 585, no. 100.)

[47]Memoir of Court of Spain sent July 26, 1776. *(Ibid.,* 585, no. 100, fol. 185.) Grimaldi to Ossun, October 8, 1776. *(Ibid.,* 582, no. 21.)

up a nation in the New World as a friend to France and a barrier to British aggression; Grimaldi feared an independent state as a constant menace to the possessions of Spain. With these conflicting aims there could be no sympathy of action between the two crowns.

The conflicting ideas of France and Spain became first apparent on the question of giving aid to the revolting colonies. Both had furnished money and supplies for prolonging the war; but while the aid of France had been, under the direction of Beaumarchais, steady and zealous, the grants of Spain had been given grudgingly and only at the urgent solicitations of her ally. Early in 1776 the British navy succeeded in blockading many American ports and Vergennes decided to seek new means of aiding the colonies. He proposed that Louisiana should be used as a base from which supplies could be furnished to the insurgents. Spain had good reason, he urged, to fortify and provision this province, and, while doing this, it would be easy to send provisions into the English provinces.[48] Grimaldi declined to fortify the mouth of the Mississippi, but courteously offered Vergennes the privilege of using New

[48] "Les avenues [to America] sont bien gardées quil sera desormais très difficile de percer par mer dans ce continent la route de la Louisiane est presque la seule quoique bien plus longue, mais nous n'en avons plus la possession et vous connoisses la repugnance des Espagnoles pour donner acces aux Etrangers..... Les Anglois disent a la force de l'Europe quils manquent de vetements, d'armes et des munitions de guerre; c'est indiquer ce quil seroit expedient de leurs fournir et ou pourroit ou mieux leurs faire trouver leurs besoins qu'a Louisiane. L'Espagne a des grands motifs pour fortifier et pour aprovisionner cette colonie: c'est lavant [MS. illegible] du nouveau Mexique: que des choses sous ce pretexte ne pourrait on pas y porter, dont a titre de commerce les insurgens pourroient traiter. A seroit leur affaire ensuite de les faire arriver au lieu de la consummation. Les derrieres sont libre. . . . les insurgens etant sans numeraire et leur denrees netant pas propus a ce commerce il faudroit leur livrer a credit les efforts quon leur fourniroit sauf a les payer ensuite par envoy de leur denrees dans les ports d'Espagne; d'ailleurs quelques millieurs de barrils de poudre ne sont pas un objet [MS illegible] pour une aussi grande puissance que l'Esp." Vergennes to Ossun, March 15, 1776. (*Esp.*, 579, no. 116, new no. 11.)

Orleans as a depot from which the French could aid the colonists. New Orleans was of no use, he urged, for the defence of the Gulf of Mexico, and no plausible pretext could be offered for fortifying it. No arms could be furnished, he continued, for all those made in Spain bore the royal insignia; but, if France cared to despatch an expedition, Spain would pay a part of its expenses.[49]

Vergennes declined the use of New Orleans on the conditions offered by Grimaldi. He argued that while Spain could increase her forces there on account of the proximity of the revolt,[50] French troops in the Mississippi Valley

[49]"Ce ministre [Grimaldi] est convenu quil seroit desormais tres difficile de percer par mer dans le continent anglois de l'Amerique septentrionale et que la route de la Louisiane, quoique bien plus longue, étoit presque la seule par laquelle on put être informé de ce qui se passeroit dans le continent anglois; il a ajouté la permission de se rendre a la Louisiane aux sujets que la France jugeroit a propos d'y envoyer pour remplir d'objet desire. Ossun to Vergennes, March 28, 1776. *(Esp.,* 579, no. 145, fol. 24.) "M. . . . . Grimaldi m'a dit que le Roi son Maitre n'y trouvoit, d'autre difficulte que dansles moyens de l'executer de maniere a pouvoir le desavouer et avec le plus grand secret possible, que l'Espagne n'etoit pas dans l'usuage d'envoyer souvent des batiments a la Louisiane: que cette Colonie n'etant pas susceptible d'etre fortifee ni d'etre regardee comme un poste interessant la conservation du Mexique ne seroit pas un pretexte plausible; que toutes les armes que se font en Espagne protent la marque des fabriques Royales: quil faudroit donc que les effets dont il s'agit pussent partir de France, destinees en apparance pour un de nos Colonies mais reellement pour la Louisiane. Ossun to Vergennes, April 1, 1776. (*Ibid.,* 580, no. 2, new 25.)

[50]Vergennes to Ossun, April 22, 1776. *(Ibid.,* 580, no. 46, new 7.) Nous ne pensons pas differement de M. Grimaldi sur la commodité dont peutêtre la Louisiane pour y etablir un entrepost ou les insurgens trouverouent a s'aprovisionner des gendres qui peuvent leur manquer: mais sil Espagne qui possede ce pays manque de motifs pour y envoyer l'aliment de ce commerce, quil pretexte pourrions nous employes pour couvrir l'envoy que nous pourrions y faire de nos batimens, prevenir quils ne fussent suspectes visites, et arrites?" *Ibid.*

would at once arouse English suspicion.[51] Grimaldi, however, refused to change his attitude and the matter was allowed to drop.[52]

At the close of 1776 new conditions arose to pull the policies of the Bourbon powers still further apart. In December, Benjamin Franklin arrived in Paris as the envoy of Congress, and soon after the incompetent and vacillating Grimaldi was succeeded by the able and aggressive Count de Florida Blanca. Franklin at once made a most favorable impression on Paris and the French court. The moderation of the American demands delighted Vergennes and he was convinced that the time had come for France to recognize the new republic and take steps for the humiliation of Great Britain. He assumed that Spain would still act in harmony with his court, and arranged for a meeting between Franklin and Aranda.

Aranda had already given himself to the cause of war. He was the leader of the French party at the Spanish court and devoted to the Family Compact. He had been a soldier of Frederick the Great, an enemy of the clerical party, and was a student and admirer of eighteenth century French

[51] "... J'attendrai M. la conversation que M. le M. de Grimaldi vous avoit promisé sur l'usuage quom poruoit faire de la Louisiane pour y faire trouver aux Americans les munitions dont ils manquent. Nous ne pouvons pas nous servir de cette voye; des permissions particulieres accordees a quelques de nos armateurs decleroient le but de ces envoys et soumet troient nos batimens a etre detournes de leur route par les Anglois. Les Espagnols ont au contraire un motif aparent pour couvrir les envoys qui peuvent se faire dans cette partie. Le feu de la revolte qui saproche de cette frontiere est une raison legitime pour y porter avec abondance tous les moyens qui peuvent la faire respecter." Vergennes to Ossun, April 12, 1776. *(Esp.*, 580, no. 29, new 16.)

[52] M. Grimaldi .... a trouvé forte justes les considerations qui empechent la France d'envoyer a la Louisiane des emissaires pour eclairer ce qui se passe dans les Colonies Britainniques et d'engager des negocians et des navigateurs francais a fournir aux besoins des Provinces Angloises revoltes. Ce Ministre a senti que les memes motifs qui suspendoient la prevoyance du Gouvernment Espagnol devoient l'interdire au Ministere Francois; aussi c'est une idee dont il ne sera plus question." Ossun to Vergennes, May 6, 1776. *(Ibid.*, 580, no. 76, new 35.)

philosophy. He had driven the Jesuits from Spain but had been unable to maintain his position at the court and had retired as ambassador to Versailles.[53] Here he bent his efforts to bringing about a war with Great Britain. He pictured to his court the loss of Louisiana and the West Indies unless a strong effort were made to save them,[54] and had already convinced Grimaldi that another general war was inevitable.[55]

The hopes of Franklin to bring France and Spain into alliance with the United States seemed near realization,[56] when all his plans were broken up by the overthrow of Grimaldi and his party at the court of Charles III. Grimaldi was sent to Italy, and, altho Aranda was allowed to retain his post, he lost all influence and was no longer entrusted with important negotiations between the two courts. The tone of Spanish diplomacy changed in a night and Vergennes found that the faith of kingdoms was no more to be relied upon than the promises of republics.

[53]Bancroft, *United States,* V, 128.

[54]See p. 41, note 35.

[55]Grimaldi informed Aranda that he believed there were many advantages in beginning the war with Great Britain at once. He declared his belief that this power would begin war without notice and use her forces in America in an attack on some of the Spanish colonies. October 8, 1776. *(Esp.,* 582, no. 21.) Spain sent a fleet to cruise in the waters of the southern West Indies while the French maintained vessels off the southern coast of North America to watch the British ships which might attempt to enter the Gulf of Mexico. *Archives de la Marine, B4,* 128, p. 194.

[56]Grimaldi wrote to Aranda, February 4, 1777, regarding an alliance with the Americans which he regarded as probable altho he felt no enthusiasm for it and was fearful of treachery. (*Esp.,* 583, no. 70. See also *Memoir of Spain,* January 3, 1777.) In this Grimaldi set forth the danger of an attack from England and suggested that Spain should imitate the "celerité des Anglois". As the war was "indispensable" Spain would not be the aggressor. (*Ibid.,* 583, no. 42.) On January 27, Ossun wrote Vergennes as if an alliance with the Americans were concluded. *(Ibid.,* no. 11, fol. 8.) During the next month Grimaldi was busied with projects of war and schemes for aiding the colonies. Grimaldi to Aranda, February 4, 1777. (*Ibid.,* 583, no. 70.) Ossun to Vergennes, February 29, 1777. *(Ibid.,* 579., no. 77.)

The successor of Grimaldi, Don Jose Monino, Count de Florida Blanca, was an able and ambitious man and subservient to the wishes of the king and to the interests of Spain. Grimaldi had negotiated the Family Compact of 1761 and was willing to stand by it, but Florida Blanca cared nothing for the alliance. The rule of the foreigner in Spain was at an end, and a Spanish ministry began the formation of a Spanish policy.[57] The new minister was intensely jealous of French influence, and proceeded to lay out a policy calculated to make Spain independent and France a suppliant. No longer did the Spanish ministry look to Vergennes for guidance, but her aid was henceforth to command its price and a price increasingly exorbitant. An intense royalist, Florida Blanca hated the new republic across the Atlantic,[58] and refused to accept Vergennes's plan for a triple alliance. A strong imperialist, he hoped to recover the ancient dominions of his king. His imperialist and royalist principles combined made him oppose the recognition of the United States, and led him to seek in every way to restrict the boundaries of the new republic. Such was his dislike of the United States that he refused to receive its representatives as long as possible; and, when he did receive them, it was with coldness and reserve. Florida Blanca was a most skilful diplomat. In every point he succeeded in overreaching Vergennes, and throughout the war and during the negotiations for peace he was the most resourceful and determined enemy of the American cause. No longer was Vergennes able to discuss freely and with assurance the future of the new republic; he must consider always the opposition of Florida Blanca.

With Florida Blanca was associated Galvez, minister for the Indies, who included among his duties the management of colonial affairs. Like his chief he was sincere and single-minded in his patriotism; but he did not show the

[57]Bancroft's excellent characterization of Florida Blanca is borne out by the documents. *United States*, V, 137 et seq.

[58]Montmorin to Vergennes, December 23, 1777. (*Esp.*, 587, no. 125.)

same subserviency to the wishes of Charles III. He often opposed the measures of the prime minister regarding the policy of Spain, and showed an active sympathy for the American insurgents. In his hatred for the enemies of his country he sometimes showed himself as radical as Aranda.[59] Such aid as the Americans received from Spain was largely due to his favor.

The ideas of Florida Blanca differed from those of Vergennes in every important detail. The Spanish minister had determined upon a policy of peace, and as the price of peace he expected to gain large accessions of territory in the New World. Furthermore, he showed no inclination to give recognition to the United States in their struggle for freedom. He felt no love for the British Empire, but he dreaded more the growing power of the young nation in America. He regarded it as already a rival to Spain for the possession of the Floridas, and a dangerous contender for the vast territories west of the Alleghanies.

Florida Blanca had a definite policy in view; he planned to hold the balance of power between Great Britain and her enemies, and to take whatever position would offer the best opportunity for an increase of Spanish influence. He believed he could attain his ends without involving Spain in war; but he realized that, if his country should have any weight in the final settlement, it must be prepared for any emergency. He did not know, too, at what moment his schemes might fail, and a British fleet fall upon the exposed colonies of the empire and reduce them to subjection. From the nature of his policy, the course of Florida Blanca could not fail to impress outsiders as timid and vacillating, but the inconsistencies of his actions gave his policy its only chance of success.

"We do not need to undertake war in order to augment our power, for whatever the outcome of the struggle between England and her colonies, our power will be in-

[59]Ossun to Vergennes, December 9, 1776. (*Esp.*, 582, no. 163, new 112; Bancroft, *United States*, V, 136.)

creased,"[60] wrote Florida Blanca soon after assuming direction of affairs. To Vergennes he explained himself less clearly. "The two monarchs," he urged, "will not swerve from their principle of moderation, if they wish to profit, by some happy opportunity to recover, by way of negotiation, some of the territories which legitimately belong to them, or which have been usurped from them by violence."[61]

Against these ideas Vergennes protested vigorously. There were no territories either in Europe or America, he declared, tempting enough to compensate for the hazards, "les calamites, et l'epuisement resultans dune guerre." France had all the colonies she needed, for the interest of her industry, he urged, and more extensive possessions would be but a burden. Even the loss of Canada ought to be regretted less, he declared, since its abandonment has been the signal for the revolt of the English provinces. He admitted the interest of France in the Newfoundland fisheries, but he wrote of the matter with no enthusiasm.[62]

These radically different views of the two ministers could admit of no compromise. Florida Blanca cared nothing for the Newfoundland fisheries or for the commerce of the United States. His policy was one of territorial aggression, while Vergennes opposed all conquests. Against the French minister's idea of war to enfeeble the British Empire, Florida Blanca set up the plan of Spanish aggrandizement by peaceful negotiations.

In spite of his pacific intentions, however, Florida Blanca continued his preparations for war. He knew that the game of diplomacy could be successful only when supported by arms; and he saw a real danger to the Spanish

[60]Florida Blanca to Aranda, April 7, 1777. (Translation in *Esp.*, 584, no. 14, new 31.)

[61]Quoted by Vergennes in note to Aranda, April 26, 1777. (*Ibid.*, 584, no. 40.)

[62]See Vergennes to Aranda, April 26, 1777. "Si la perte du Canada", he continued, "lui a été sensible, elle doit la moins regretter depuis que l'abandon qu elle a été obligée d'en faire est devenu le signal de revolte des provinces angloises." (*Esp.*, 584, no. 40. See p. 34, note 15.)

empire in the cupidity of Great Britain. He felt that Spain should prepare to defend herself and particularly her American colonies. For this purpose he was glad to continue to act in cooperation with France. The naval heads of the two nations had already formed plans for patroling the west Atlantic, and commanders of ships were ordered to watch carefully the movements of English vessels, especially those trying to enter the Gulf of Mexico or the waters of the West Indies. The instructions further ordered that the commanders of both nations were to aid each other, and to guard equally the interests of the two crowns.[63] Besides these arrangements Florida Blanca provided for the military defense of the Spanish colonies. An army corps was sent to San Domingo, and additional troops were despatched to Havana, Vera Cruz, and Porto Rico.[64] Special attention was given to Louisiana on account of its proximity to the British possessions. Spanish fears were increased by the great number of English Loyalists who were fleeing from the Atlantic provinces and settling along the east bank of the Mississippi. The Spanish officials at New Orleans had already recommended that the colony be placed in a state of defense against the English, who could easily come from Pensacola or Mobile, or even from Canada, by way of the Mississippi and Ohio.[65]

While preparing to defend Spanish colonists against Great Britain, Florida Blanca could not ignore the new nation across the ocean. Its representatives were already in Paris and one of them was seeking admission to the Spanish court.[66] Frenchmen were enthusiastic for the

[63]The Spanish were to guard the Gulf of Mexico and the approaches to New Orleans, while the French were to watch the West Indies. *Project d'Instructions correspondantes a cette de la cour d'Espagne . . . . (Archives de la Marine,* B4, 128, p. 194.) Florida Blanca frequently urged the necessity of getting ready for any emergency. Ossun to Vergennes, February, 1777. *(Esp.,* 583, no. 118, new 21; *ibid.,* no 127, new 24.)

[64]Ossun to Vergennes, February 27, 1777. *(Ibid.,* 583, no. 127, new 24.)

[65]Fortier, *Louisiana,* II, 25-33.

[66]Franklin and Deane were in Paris, and Arthur Lee started in the spring of 1777 for Madrid.

independence of the new republic. Aranda at Paris and the friends of France in Spain kept urging Florida Blanca to join with the court of Versailles for another struggle against the common enemy.[67]

Altho Florida Blanca had no intention of recognizing the independence of the United States, he believed it for the best interests of Spain that the war should continue. Great Britain already suspected the Spaniards of aiding the insurgents and a sudden collapse of the revolt would mean the end of Florida Blanca's hopes to regain some of the former possessions of Spain, and might mean the loss of others. To prevent such a danger he kept up the negotiations with Vergennes and furnished aid for the Americans.[68]

Early in 1777, Arthur Lee had set out from Paris to Madrid to secure Spanish assistance for the American cause. He was allowed to proceed no further than Burgos, where Grimaldi met him. We know little of the interview. Grimaldi apparently did not treat the mission seriously and Lee's accounts are colored by his sense of personal importance.[69] It is clear, however, that Lee was willing

[67]Ossun repeatedly wrote of the earnest insinuations of Aranda to treat with America and go to war with Portugal and Great Britain. Ossun to Vergennes, January 23, 1777. (*Esp.*, 583, no. 39, new 7.)

[68]Ossun informed Vergennes that Florida Blanca was in accord with France in regard to the war in America, that both powers desired its continuance. March 3, 1777. (*Esp.*, 583, no. 136, new 28.) Florida Blanca wrote the same to Aranda, and declared that it was important to sustain the American colonies, for as long as the war continued both sides would be weakened. March 5, 1777. (*Ibid.*, 140, new 1.) "M. de floride blanca m'a assuré Monsieur, qu'on avoit dêja fait des remis d'argent a M. Lee, et qu'il retournoit en France satisfait des secours pecuniares qui luy avoient étè promis." Ossun to Vergennes, March 24, 1777. (*Ibid.*, 583, no. 184, new 39.)

[69]On March 3, Ossun wrote that Grimaldi had neglected for a long time to give the Spanish court an account of his interview with Lee. (*Ibid.*, 583, no. 136, new 28; Bancroft, *United States*, V, 137.) Lee asserted that he received encouragement from Spain and a promise that war should be begun within a year. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 282.) There is no evidence to support Lee's assertions.

to offer, in return for an alliance, the assistance of the United States in the conquest of the Floridas.[70] While Spain was anxious for those provinces she would not enter into negotiations with the United States until they had given stronger evidence that they were able to maintain their independence. Charles III declared that the offers of Lee were premature.[71] Spain was willing to aid the Americans secretly but would enter into no negotiations with them which might mean a recognition of independence.

In spite of Florida Blanca's resolutions for peace, preparations for war were rapidly increased.[72] Louisiana would doubtless be the first object of attack in case of war, and would afford an excellent depot of supply for the insurgents as long as Spain cared to aid them. Galvez, the president of the Council of the Indies, sent over as governor of Louisiana, his nephew, Bernardo de Galvez, an energetic and ambitious man, full of sympathy for American independence. The younger Galvez entered with vigor on his administration and prepared to begin the struggle along the Mississippi. For several years the British had controlled the trade of the river, but their monopoly was now at an end. The Spanish governor at

[70]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 290. "J'ai l'honneur de vous informer qu'une des propositions que le M. Lee a faites a l'Espagne pour l'exciter a venir au secours de Colonies Angloises, a été qu'elles s'engageroient a prendre Pensacola conquête facile selon M. Lee et a remettre immediatement cette place au pouvoir de Sa Majeste Catholique. Je sais que cette Monarque a repondu qu'il verroit avec beaucoup de plaisir les Insurgens faire cette acquisition mais qu'il n'en accepteroit la cession que lorsque leur independence seroit assurée. C'est en traivaillant avec M. de Galves que le Roy Catholique a dicté cette reponse, mais j'ai lieu a croire que l'avis de M. le Comte de floride blanca seroit que l'Espagne acceptat l'offre des Colonies a titre de depot en attendant la decesion de la guerre qu'elles soutiement. Je doute que son sentiment soit adopte." Ossun to Vergennes, March 24, 1777. *(Esp.*, 583, no. 184, new 39.)

[71]"Le Roi d'Espagne a seulement daigne me dire . . . . qu'il avoit fait connoitre a ce Deputé [Lee] qu'il les [propositions] regarderoit comme prematures." Ossun to Vergennes. *(Ibid.)*

[72]Vergennes to Ossun, May 2, 1777. *(Ibid.*, 584, no. 48, new 30.)

once seized all the British vessels within reach and ordered the confiscation of all that should enter the port. In one day, soon after his arrival, eleven English vessels, laden with rich cargoes, were captured and condemned by his orders.[73]

The belligerent attitude of the Bourbon powers alarmed the British court. The British ambassadors, Stormount at Paris and Grantham at Madrid, were instructed to demand explanations regarding the immense military and naval demonstrations in America. Both declared that the intentions of the British court were peaceful, and they offered a British guarantee of the Spanish possessions in America.[74]

To the British representations, both Vergennes and Florida Blanca gave the same answer. They declared that it was necessary to guard Spanish interests in America, and Florida Blanca added, by way of explanation, that a strong force was needed to hold in subjection the Spanish colonies which were being seduced by the example of the British provinces.

The protests of Great Britain was a step towards the success of Florida Blanca's policy. Her alarm convinced him that she was ready to concede much for the sake of peace. France was seeking Spain's alliance and the Americans were bidding high for her assistance. With French, Britons, and Americans seeking favors from Spain, Florida Blanca felt strong enough to assume an independent attitude. He informed Ossun that Spain had much to lose and nothing to gain from war with Great Britain,[75] but that the two crowns could settle the troubles in America and receive valuable concessions as the price of neutrality.[76] Charles III again and again declared his wish

[73]Fortier, *Louisiana*, II, 56-57.

[74]Vergennes to Ossun, May 2, 1777. (*Esp.*, 584, no. 48, new 30.) Ossun to Vergennes, May 19, 1777. (*Ibid.*, no. 80, new 60.)

[75]Ossun to Vergennes, May 15, 1777. (*Ibid.*, 584, no. 75, new 58. See also p. 39, note 31.)

[76]Vergennes to Ossun, June 21, 1777. (*Esp.*, 584, no. 140, new 38.)

to end his days in peace, and Spain was committed to a policy of masterly inactivity. Florida Blanca had lost much of his fear of British aggression, but he greatly distrusted France. He wished to recover the old empire and influence of Spain, but he did not believe that Vergennes would aid him in his efforts. Spanish diplomacy was still in the shoals; but its pilot felt that if he would bide his time, the warring nations must allow his country to regain some part of the vast influence she had wielded under Charles I.

The defection of Spain did not cause Vergennes to despair. He still favored sustaining the Americans and still counted on the assistance of Florida Blanca. He made no protest against the action of the Spanish court, but declared that its measures were in full accord with his own policy.[77] He agreed that the continuance of the war was beneficial to the Bourbon powers, and was glad to get Spanish aid for the Americans. He was anxious, however, about the future policy of Florida Blanca,[78] but hoped to persuade him to unite with France in recognition of the United States. To this end and doubtless at his instance, Franklin wrote directly to the Spanish ambassador, asking for an alliance, and offering to assist Spain in the conquest of Pensacola, if only the use of its port, together with the free navigation of the Mississippi should be granted to the Americans.[79]

[77]Florida Blanca to Aranda, March 5, 1777. (Translation in *Esp.*, 583, no. 140, fol. 1.) Ossun asserted the same thing to Vergennes. March 3, 1777. *(Ibid.*, no. 136, fol. 28.) "Les principes d'apres lesquels la Cour de Madrid a dirigé ses responses au M. Lee sont entierement conformés a ceux que nous avons adopté a l'egard des insurgens et que nous continuerons de suivre jusqu'a ce que les circonstances nous paroisent en exiger d'autres." Vergennes to Ossun, March 25, 1777. *(Ibid.*, no. 186, new 23.)

[78]"Je vous prie M..... surtout de nous mander quelle somme d'argent ce Pce s'est determiné de luy Congress accorder.... Je vous prie M. de nous informer exactement que le Roi Cque fera parvenir . . . ." *(Ibid.)*

[79]Franklin to Aranda, April 7, 1777. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 304.)

Vergennes made quick use of Franklin's offer to Spain. He had previously asserted that neither country had use for conquests; but now he began to dangle before the hungry eyes of the Spaniards rich conquests as the reward for their services. He spoke, not only of the Floridas, but even suggested the conquest of the rich sugar islands.[80] He pointed out again the danger which Spain must encounter if she allowed a settlement of the struggle in which she had no part. Such an outcome, he declared, would endanger the whole colonial empire of the two crowns.[81]

Altho Vergennes was willing to concede much to the ambition of Spain, he still asked nothing for France. To Louis XVI he argued that the only interest of the monarchy was the enfeeblement of Great Britain. This could best be accomplished by breaking up the British empire in America. With Canada in the hands of the English, he argued that the United States must necessarily hold close to France for their own safety, and thus French prestige would be increased.[82]

That part of British America not in revolt, he would leave in possession of its rightful sovereign. He hoped in this way to ensure a constant rivalry between the two Anglo-Saxon powers which would hold the United States in dependence on France. Vergennes would make the United States an independent nation as a barrier to British aggression. It was of no interest to France to create a great and extensive republic, whose boundaries could be extended only by the cost of much blood and money. He would ensure the limits of the United States as he conceived them to be; but to his mind, Canada and the Mississippi Valley, the ancient possessions of France, had never been a part of the English colonies, and he would not

[80]Vergennes to Aranda, April 10, 1777. *(Esp.,* 584, no. 21.)

[81]Vergennes to Ossun, April 12, 1777. *(Ibid.,* no. 22, new 26.)

[82]*Memoire au Roi,* July 23, 1777; marked "apprové". *(Esp.,* 585, no. 56.)

make an effort to obtain them for the new republic. Here was the bone of contention. Spain wished the east bank of the Mississippi to insure her control of the Gulf of Mexico; the United States claimed it by right of their ancient charters; while Vergennes, anxious to maintain the balance of power in America, preferred that Great Britain should keep it. He wished to establish the United States as a menace to British power; Florida Blanca feared the new nation as a danger to Spanish power. To bring Spain and the United States to the point of view of Vergennes was the problem of French diplomacy and its solution was to give the French minister many thoughtful hours.

# CHAPTER III

## THE QUESTION OF THE WEST.

In the policy of Vergennes America was but a club for the humiliation of Great Britain. It was his plan to build up a nation in America with sufficient strength to check British aggression, but not powerful enough to be independent of French influence or to threaten the balance of power in the New World.[1] The disintegration of the British Empire in America was rapidly going on, and Vergennes felt that, with Spanish aid, he could control the result. The forces of colonial hatred were at his service; could he also command the strength of Spain's jealousy and ambition?

The ambitions, the hopes, and the plans of the Americans beyond their mere desire for independence were unknown to Vergennes, or at best he discerned them but vaguely. In the development of his policy the French minister showed little interest and less knowledge of the conditions and purposes of the revolting provinces. From the time of Bonvouloir's mission until the surrender of Burgoyne, neither France nor Spain had any representatives in America. Both countries had felt the need of more information; but neither had regarded the matter as important enough to command immediate action.[2]

[1] *Memoire au Roi (Esp.,* 585, no. 56.) "Si elle [independence] s'achevé par notre môyen, elle doit en abaissant L'Angleterre relever d'autant la france, et la remettre a son rang." *Reflexions* [unsigned], January 7, 1777. (*E. U.,* II, no. 16, new 28; Doniol, *Histoire,* II, 118.)

[2] In July, 1777, Vergennes suggested to Spain that each country should have some one in America "wise, sensible, and discreet, who, without character, or ostensible mission" should investigate conditions there. (*Esp.,* 585, no. 45, new 53.) For the duties of this position he thought a merchant best fitted. To Ossun, August 25, 1777. (*Ibid.,* no. 51, new

During the years from 1770 to 1777 France paid little attention to the Mississippi Valley. The only interest she showed in this territory was purely commercial. In the foreign office there are some memorials on the tobacco of Louisiana, and Ossun recommended that it take the place of the Virginia tobacco, which could hardly be obtained.[3] There was no suggestion, however, that France should attempt to recover her political power in Louisiana.

To the mind of Vergennes it is probable that the question of who should control the West never occurred until it was forced upon him by the issues of the war.[4] In

137.) In November, Florida Blanca informed Ossun that he already had an agent in America, a man named "Edouard" who had been in the colonies before on matters of business and was regarded as possessing the prudence and skill necessary for a difficult mission. Ossun to Vergennes, November 8, 1777. *(Ibid.,* 586, no. 139; Doniol, *Histoire,* II, 578.) What became of Edouard we do not know. There is no further mention of him in the documents in the foreign office in Paris, and when Gerard, the French minister, landed in America in 1778, Spain was represented by Miralles. (*E. U.,* IV, no. 23, new 97.) Vergennes still delayed. He gave as his reason the difficulty of finding a suitable agent. In November he declared that he had in mind one who, he thought, would be admirable, and who should go at once by way of San Domingo. *(Esp.,* 587, no. 17; Doniol, *Histoire,* II, 580.) At the same time he asked the Spanish government to transmit to him any information which it might receive. Vergennes finally sent a man named Holker, though it is probable that his original choice was Beaumarchais. (Doniol, *Histoire,* II, 615.) Holker's instructions were given verbally, but there is a minute of them in the French foreign office. November 25, 1777. *(E. U.,* II, no. 144, new 266.) In this document there is every evidence that Vergennes knew nothing of the desires of the Americans. Holker was to learn of the situation of affairs in America and report them at once. He was to represent to the Americans their need for some power to protect them from Great Britain and to suggest that France might aid them.

[3] *Esp.,* 583, no. 70. Ossun to Vergennes, January 27, 1777. (*Ibid.,* no. 52.)

[4] When the question of the Mississippi Valley was brought to his attention in 1778, and he was informed of the American demands regarding the navigation of the Mississippi, Vergennes wrote, " . . . . je vous assure qu'il me paroitroit etonnant qu'on refusat a cette demande. Cependant il peut y avoir pour la negative des considerations locales que J'ignore, et qui peuvent meriter quelque attention." Vergennes to Gerard, October 28, 1778. *(E. U.,* V, no. 43, new 105.)

his geography, however, the West was not a part of the American colonies. It was the ancient Canada and Eastern Louisiana over which the French and Indian Wars had been fought; and altho the Frenchman had lost all in the struggle, he could not be compelled to rewrite his geography. The English also, in the "Quebec Act," had followed more closely French ideas of geography than those of their colonies. Thus it was that in 1778 a French officer describes the United States as bounded on the north by Canada, and on the west "still by Canada and the Indian tribes as far as the Mississippi."[5]

There is no evidence that Vergennes had ever considered the question of the navigation of the Mississippi until called upon to defend the seizure of English vessels in the Mississippi by Galvez in February, 1777. Vergennes learned of this action of the Spanish governor through the newspapers about the first of October. At that time he did not know that the English would complain, but he declared that any protest could not be founded on the common law of America, where each nation reserved to itself its exclusive navigation and its own commerce. He held that the English had no more right to carry on commerce on the right bank of the Mississippi than the French had to trade along the coasts of North America, where all French ships were arrested and seized.[6] It is clear from this that Vergennes had not come to the Spanish view of the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi, for he described the Spanish rights to the right bank by an argument which would give the English control of the left bank. Later when the Spanish ministry sought to deprive the Americans of the right to navigate the Mississippi, Vergennes expressed his surprise.[7]

Spain did not in any way commit herself on the subject of the navigation of the Mississippi until, as previously noticed, the governor of Louisiana seized the Eng-

[5] *Archives de la Marine*, B4, 144, 23.

[6] Vergennes to Ossun, October 3, 1777. (*Esp.*, 586, no. 105, new 63.)

[7] Vergennes to Gerard, October 28, 1778. (*E. U.*, V. no. 43, fol. 105.)

lish ships in the river. Just what instructions the ministry had given the governor is not certain, but it has already been shown that his act was in accord with the policy of Galvez, the president of the council for the Indies. In October, 1777, Ossun wrote to Vergennes that Spain held to the opinion that England did not have the right to navigate the Mississippi or to deposit merchandise at its mouth.[8] Spain further maintained that the silence with which the English received the news of the seizure of their ships gave grounds to believe that they acquiesced in her position.

Canada and the Floridas offered problems distinct from that of the West proper. American efforts to annex the former have already been described, and they did not cease until the close of the Revolution. Great Britain had no intention of surrendering this province, and France had no interest in helping the United States to take it. The Floridas offered still less difficulty. It was recognized by all that Spain was anxious to recover them, and the Americans were willing to aid this project in return for recognition and assistance.

The Declaration of Independence brought the question of the extent of the new republic at once to the front, and with the problem of boundaries is connected every diplomatic negotiation of the American Revolution. On September 17, 1776, Congress resolved on a plan of treaty to be proposed to the king of France, Article IX of which provided that "the most Christian King" shall never invade nor under any pretense attempt to possess himself of Labrador, New Britain, Nova Scotia, Acadia, Canada, Florida, or any other part of North America. It further declared its intention to annex these territories to the United States,[9] but assured Spain that it had no designs on her possessions, and would in no case molest them.[10]

[8]Ossun to Vergennes. (*Esp.*, 586, no. 138, new 118.)
[9]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), V. 770.
[10]Instructions to agent at court of France. (*Ibid.*, 816.)

At the same time Congress elected Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Arthur Lee as American commissioners to France, and appointed a committee to draft instructions for them. This committee reported that if France would aid the United States in reducing Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and Cape Breton, the French people should be allowed equal rights of fishing there with the Americans to the exclusion of all others. The commissioners were also to offer France half of Newfoundland provided the remainder of the Island, with Nova Scotia and Cape Breton, were annexed to the United States. If necessary to get French aid the commissioners were to assure "his most Christian majesty that such of the British West India Islands as, in the course of the war, shall be reduced by the united forces of France and the United States shall be yielded in absolute property to his most Christian majesty." The committee also suggested the advisability of getting Spain into the alliance, and that, in return for her aid the United States would assist her in the reduction of Pensacola, if to them should be left "the free and uninterrupted navigation of the Mississippi and the use of the harbour of Pensacola."[11] Nothing was said of the West, but it was not long before a claim to it was set forth. The West was not considered a subject for negotiation, for it was held to be already a part of the union of states. These instructions were the first declaration by Congress of its attitude regarding that part of British America not in rebellion.

Of the commissioners chosen by Congress only Franklin was of first rate ability. He was undoubtedly the great statesman of the Revolution. He had done much for his country before becoming commissioner to France, but it was in Paris that he was to accomplish the great work of his life. A man of broad experience and wide attainments, he soon made himself master of the situation. His versatility and genial sympathy made him fit easily into the

[11] *Journals of Continental Congress*, VI, 1057.

distinctive characteristics of French life. The best known of all Americans, not only in politics but in philosophy and science as well, from the moment of his arrival he was a person to venerate and respect.

Franklin had long thought of the problems relating to the territories beyond the limits of the thirteen states, and the experience of years reinforced his ideas. As early as 1754, shortly after the Albany Convention, he had drawn up a plan for the settlement of the western colonies and had presented a strong argument why this plan should be carried out.[12] Again in 1760, during the struggles of the last French war, he had urged the importance of this section. "I have long been of the opinion," he wrote, "that the foundations of the future grandeur and stability of the British empire lie in America; and altho, like other foundations, they are low and are little seen, they are, nevertheless, broad and strong enough to support the greatest political structure human wisdom ever has created. I am therefore by no means in favor of restoring Canada. If we keep it, all the country from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi will, in another century, be filled with British people."[13] Thus, as early as 1760, Franklin had a juster view of the West then did the leaders of the nation thirty years later. With a breadth of vision, greater than that of any other man of his day, Franklin saw the grandeur of the West. In a paper on the "Interest of Great Britain" he asserted that "while our strength at sea continues, the banks of the Ohio, in point of ease and expeditious conveyance of troops, are nearer to London than the more remote parts of France and Spain to their respective capitals; and much nearer than Connaught and Ulster were in the days of Queen Elizabeth."[14] To Franklin's appreciation of the West and its resources, and to his foresight and watchfulness during the years of his residence in France, is due,

[12] Franklin, *Works* (Smyth ed.), III, 358.
[13] *Ibid.*, IV, 4.
[14] *Ibid.*, IV, 72.

more than to any other cause, the preservation of American domination in the Mississippi Valley.

Franklin arrived at Paris in the middle of December, 1776, and on the twenty-third he, with Deane and Arthur Lee, addressed a note to Vergennes, informing him of their mission and requesting an audience. The request was granted, the commissioners were courteously received, and they submitted to the French minister a sketch of the treaty suggested by Congress. The commissioners also urged upon Vergennes that France and Spain unite with the United States to deprive Great Britain of her West India possessions. They also offered to guarantee the possessions of France in the West Indies and such other conquests as she might make there. France was also to have a favorable commercial treaty, by which her ports were to receive the trade which formerly flowed into British markets. In return, the Americans asked only that France should renounce all claims to the mainland of North America. They also urged a treaty of recognition and commerce.[15]

Altho Vergennes returned no answer to the American overtures, he was surprised and pleased at their moderation. He felt no objection to giving the United States a free hand in North America, and he was gratified at the offer to guarantee French possessions in the West Indies, altho he declared the faith of a republic was little to be relied upon. He believed, moreover, that a favorable commercial treaty would give France all the advantages of colonies without the trouble and expense of governing them.[16]

During the next few months the Americans presented in greater detail the desires of Congress. Deane submitted a memorial to Vergennes urging a treaty with France for the "common security" of the two countries. He urged that the whole British Empire in America be conquered,

[15]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 239-246.

[16]Vergennes to Ossun, January 4, 1777. (*Esp.*, 583, no. 6, new 2. Same to same, January 12. (*Ibid.*, no. 20, new 53.)

France to get the West Indies and a share of the Newfoundland fisheries, while all the remainder was to go to the United States.[17]

It is probable that this proposal of Deane did not receive any serious consideration from Vergennes, for he soon came to the conclusion that it was necessary to keep Canada in the hands of the British in order to maintain the balance of power in America, and to make the United States dependent upon France.[18] It is not unlikely, however, that Vergennes was willing to allow the United States to make such conquests as they could in the West, the Floridas, and even a part of Canada, but he would never consent to use French blood in extending the boundaries of the republic. Since France, herself, had no intention of adding to her dominions, it was a matter of little moment to her what became of the British Empire when it fell.[19]

The Americans were willing to surrender their claims to the Floridas in return for Spanish assistance.[20] Franklin early discerned, however, the wide stretch of Spanish ambition; and, before it could declare itself, he demanded from Florida Blanca an express acknowledgment of the

[17]Deane to Vergennes, March 18, 1777. (*E. U.*, II, no. 72, fol. 131.) Deane had written to Jay, December 3, 1776, that articles such as he here proposed had been shown to him (Sparks, *Dip. Cor.*, I, 70), but it is probable that he meant he had suggested them himself, which is the truth. Deane was fertile with suggestions regarding the West. In December, 1776, he suggested to Congress the formation of a state north of the Ohio (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 203), and in March, 1777, he proposed to designate, as security for a loan, three thousand square miles (he writes three thousand miles square) of the most fertile land on the rivers Ohio and Mississippi, one acre of land to be given as security for each livre subscribed. (*E. U.*, II, no. 75, fol. 135.)

[18]Memoire au Roi, July 4, 1777. See p. 58, note 1. It is possible that Vergennes informed the king that Canada should remain British in order to allay the fear which that monarch had of republics, for later he showed himself willing to aid the Americans against Canada.

[19]Vergennes to Aranda, March 11, 1777 (*Esp.*, 583, no. 155); April 10 (*ibid.*, 584, new 21).

[20]Lee made this offer on his mission to Spain. See p. 53, note 70.

right of the Americans to the free navigation of the Mississippi River.[21] Thus was the issue between Spain and the United States raised. The demand for the right to navigate the Mississippi could mean only that the United States had in mind to claim the left bank of the river, and thus come in contact with the Spanish colony of Louisiana. All the fears which the Spanish ministers had entertained had now become threatening. The new republic would be a constant menace to Louisiana, and would likely either seduce it into rebellion or conquer it. With such a belief the Spanish ministry felt it necessary to do everything possible to limit the boundaries of the new republic; and this led to an effort to hold as much of the east bank of the Mississippi as it could lay claim to. Here lay the root of a vital antagonism between the two countries, and a rivalry which did not cease until Spain was driven off the American continent.

Spain had a strong commercial interest in maintaining control of the Gulf of Mexico. The English had used their right to navigate the Mississippi and their control of Mobile and Pensacola to carry off much of the trade of the Mississippi Valley. Spain now saw that if she were to remain the dominant power in the lower Mississippi she must cut off every source of competition. This meant that the Floridas and the control of the river must be the objects of Spanish diplomacy in America, and with these in the possession of Spain, the Gulf of Mexico would become a Spanish lake.[22]

While the West was becoming the subject of European diplomacy, its possession by the United States was held by Congress to be beyond question. Other questions of territorial right, however, were constantly engaging the attention of this body. The project for annexing Canada was

[21]Franklin, *Writings* (Smyth ed.), VII, 40.

[22]This phase of the subject did not come up till later, but Florida Blanca doubtless long held it in mind. See p. 80.

always before it.[23] Plans of attack were prepared and many schemes for obtaining assistance were urged.

The Floridas claimed equal attention, but they were thought of as only an inducement to get the help of Spain. The original intention of Congress to annex them to the United States was soon lost sight of in the need for foreign assistance, and at the close of 1776 the American commissioners were authorized to pledge the help of the nation in conquering them for Spain.[24] To this promise, however, was attached the proviso that the free navigation of the Mississippi and the use of the harbor of Pensacola should be accorded the citizens of the United States.

It is possible that some concessions on the part of Congress were induced partly by the efforts of the Spanish agent, Don Juan de Miralles, who came from Havana to the United States some time in 1777 as a secret and unaccredited agent of Spain. He spent some time at Charleston, where he was active among the revolutionists. Later he went to Philadelphia, where he became acquainted with several members of Congress and apparently secured their confidence. He tried to get the support of Congress for a combined expedition of Americans and Spaniards which he and Governor Henry planned to send to conquer the West.[25]

The great aim of Miralles, however, was to secure the claims of Spain to the Floridas and to the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi River. Beyond that he wished to extend Spanish authority as far as possible.[26] Spain had carefully prepared the way for her agent by showing new favors to the Americans and by furnishing them wth supplies. Galvez, who became governor in January, 1777, promised that he "would go every length possible for the

[23] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), Dec. 30, 1776; *ibid.*, VI, 1056 (Dec. 2, 1777); *ibid.*, IX, 985.

[24] *Ibid.*, VI, 1057.

[25] Gerard to Vergennes, July 25, 1778. (*E. U.*, IV, no. 41, fols. 142-147.)

[26] *Ibid.*

interest of Congress."[27] Under his administration, New Orleans became a depot for supplies for the American troops. Oliver Pollock, the agent of Congress, was allowed to carry on operations unchecked, and Spain and the United States seemed already in alliance.[28]

The question of the West, however, was still unsettled. Spain's designs were, as yet, not fully known; but the navigation of the Mississippi had already become an issue. The great Southwest was soon to become the subject of dispute, and the Northwest was as yet unwon. Great Britain still held Detroit and other important posts, and these must be captured before the States could make good their claims. Congress had practically abandoned all claims to the Floridas, and Canada was still untaken. The outcome was uncertain, and experience was to show that it depended upon two things—hard fighting and shrewd diplomacy.

[27]Oliver Pollock to Congress, September 18, 1782. *(Papers of the Continental Congress,* no. 50, no. 1, fol. 1.) In August, 1776, Gov, Unzuga granted a "Batteaux load of the King's Powder." *Ibid.*

[28]*Ibid.; E. U.,* IV, no. 41, fol. 142. The aid given by Galvez to the Americans was not unknown to the British. In the Public Record Office are numerous accounts of this. According to one the Americans were given a public guardhouse in New Orleans, and were permitted to sell openly plunder taken from the British. They were also allowed to fit out armaments and Spanish ships were furnished to take supplies up the river. *Memorials of Alexander Graydon, Robert Ross, John Campbell. (C. O.,* 5, 117.)

# CHAPTER IV

## THE FRENCH ALLIANCE.

The year 1777 was full of unrest in the politics of Europe. It was characterized by the tortuous policy of Florida Blanca, the double dealing of Vergennes, and the suspicion and distrust felt by British statesmen for their neighbors. Vergennes was constantly trying to bring Florida Blanca into a war which he had resolved to avoid, and the Spanish minister was seeking to force concessions by a system of ever-changing threats and promises. Great Britain was swayed between her need for peace and her indignation at the unfriendly attitude of the Bourbon powers.

Vergennes was still unacquainted with the vastness of Spain's ambition, but he realized that he had a gigantic task in bringing her into the struggle against Great Britain. Florida Blanca frequently declared his anxiety to maintain the alliance with France, and often expressed his willingness to go to war, but in every crisis he found some pretext which enabled him to avoid fulfilling his promises.

The Bourbon powers, however, were constantly increasing their preparations. Vergennes was in deadly earnest, and Florida Blanca knew that if he were to win any concessions a show of force at least was necessary.[1] Under these circumstances there were advanced many projects of war. Altho the two countries had stationed fleets in the West Indies, they still thought it necessary to make

[1]Florida Blanca wrote to Aranda, March 3, 1777, that while Spain desired peace, it was necessary to get ready to carry on a vigorous war. (*Esp.*, 583, no. 140, new 1.) He also informed Ossun of his intention to strengthen Spanish defenses. Ossun to Vergennes, March 3 (*ibid.*, no. 136); February 27 (*ibid.*, no. 127, new 24).

other plans to protect their interests.[2] The extreme weakness of the naval equipment of the two countries in the West Indies was regarded as dangerous to the safety of Bourbon possessions there, for it was believed that the end of the American war meant an attack upon them. The plans of the naval heads of the two countries were to carry on a defensive naval war, until, if their undertakings should prosper, they would be in position to attack some important places, such as Jamaica, Gibraltar, and Grenada, and possibly make a descent upon England or Ireland.[3]

Both Vergennes and Florida Blanca declared that their policies were in complete accord.[4] But in spite of their assertions this agreement was only on expedients and was not on anything fundamental. They saw that the continuance of the war in America was beneficial to their interests, and so they were willing to support the insurgents. Here their agreement ended.

On the fundamental question of the policy to be pursued there was a wide difference. The belief of the Spanish minister that he could attain all the ends of his country while keeping the peace has already been explained. Vergennes was very skeptical of the success of such a policy,[5] and insisted strongly on the necessity of war as the only outcome.

[2] *Archives de la Marine*, B4, 128-131.

[3] *Ibid.*, 135.

[4] "Les principes d'apres lesquels la Cour de Madrid a dirigé ses reponses au M. Lee sont entierement conformés a ceux que nous avons adopté a l'egard des insurgens . . . ." Vergennes to Ossun, March 25, 1777. (*Esp.*, 583, no. 186, new 23.) Florida Blanca said that the two crowns were in accord on the "fondamental principes." To Aranda, March 5, 1777. (*Ibid.*, no. 140.)

[5] Vergennes to Ossun, June 21, 1777. (*Esp.*, 584, no. 140, new 38.) Vergennes urged Ossun to press Florida Blanca for his memoir advocating the belief that it is possible for the two crowns to intervene in America without taking part in the war. "If he has in his familiar conversation any opinions on this subject, please inform me; altho I do not hold it impossible that the minister should have an outlook more extended than my own."

The political situation was further complicated by the suspicious attitude of Great Britain. At the beginning of the American insurrection the good will of France was taken by British statesmen as practically assured.[6] Before the close of 1775, however, the court of London was becoming suspicious. Accusations were made freely that French aid was given the rebels. "Your Lordship will not think that I am of such easy credulity as to believe that they do not connive at Succours being sent from this country to America," wrote Stormount from Paris. ". . . . This, however, My Lord, I never pretend to see, but always seem to be entirely satisfied with the assurances they give me."[7]

Throughout the years 1776 and 1777, Stormount was busy protesting against French violations of neutrality. He suspected that Vergennes had gone so far as to sign a convention with the Americans, and often threatened war.[8] Spain also was credited with hostility to Great Britain, and at the close of 1777 Stormount summed up his conclusions as follows: "I have not a shadow of doubt that this court and that of Madrid are combined against us and have long been preparing and still continue to prepare for the execution of some insidious design."[9]

With Great Britain suspicious and Spain defiant, the problem of Vergennes was a delicate one. Grimaldi had

[6]St. Paul, chargé d'affaires at Paris, to Earl of Rochford, Secretary of State for the South, September 30, 1775. (*F. O. France,* 541; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XIII, 1303.) Stormount, British ambassador to France, to Rochford, October 31. (Circourt. III. 1.)

[7]Stormount to Weymouth, December 6, 1775. (*F. O. France,* 542; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XIII, 1307.) Stormount goes on to say, "There is every reason to believe that if Choiseul came into power he would instantly take a decided step against us . . . ."

[8]Correspondence of Stormount with British foreign office. (*F. O. France,* 545; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XIV.) Stormount wrote, March 26, 1777: "I have tried to get direct proofs of this duplicity and have used every endeavor to discern if there exists any treaty or written agreement between this court and the rebels. I can find no traces of any such convention . . . . I am assured that the ministers here wish nothing in writing." (*F. O. France,* 547; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XV, 1497.)

[9]*F. O. France,* 551.

long since declared his willingness for war, and just before his retirement from office had asked only that it be postponed until the Spanish treasure ships should come in. The fleet had long since arrived with all its stores of wealth, but still Spain hesitated. To the urgings of the French the Spanish ministers replied that they were not yet ready.

The year 1777 was allowed to wear itself out with fruitless bickerings between the two powers. Vergennes continued his policy of urging Spain to war, sometimes with bright prospects of success, more often with complete defeat. At times Florida Blanca would talk in tones of undoubted belligerency; but when he had almost committed himself he would find some pretext on which to draw back.[10]

Meanwhile Vergennes was getting into more serious difficulties with Great Britain. He had gone too far to retrace his steps, and war for France had become an absolute necessity. French aid had been given almost openly to the insurgents,[11] and a powerful fleet sent to America.[12]

[10]Florida Blanca suggested in August, 1777, a plan to combine against England as soon as the treasure fleet should arrive, and the fishermen should return from Newfoundland. Ossun to Vergennes, August 21. (*Esp.*, 585, no. 131, new 93.) He declared that the treasure ships could not return before the next May. (*Ibid.*, no. 106.) Vergennes agreed to wait and be very careful, for he declared that England would seize the ships which carried fifty million piastres on the slightest pretext. Vergennes to Ossun, August 22. (*Ibid.*, no. 137, new 51.) In September Florida Blanca arranged with France to send troops to America. (September 1, *ibid.*, 586, no. 3.) He declared his approval of French measures and declared he would begin war if France were attacked. Ossun to Vergennes, September 8. (*Ibid.*, no. 33, new 103.) The next day he declared in favor of the continuation of the American war, but urged a pacific policy for the Bourbon crowns. Paper handed to Ossun, October 17, 1777. (*Ibid.*, 586, fol. 226.) From this time on Florida Blanca would say nothing in favor of war.

[11]Stormount to Weymouth, January 11, 14, 19, 21, 22. (*F. O. France*, 552.) Wentworth to Eden, December 28, January 1, 6. (Stevens, *Facsimiles*, III, 322, 327.)

[12]Vergennes to Ossun, September 19, 1777. (*Esp.*, 586, no. 58, new 147; September 26, *ibid.*, no. 59, new 147.)

British and French recognized alike that peace could not long be preserved.[13] Vergennes himself declared that the position of France every day became more critical and the duration of peace more uncertain.[14]

The surrender of Burgoyne meant to Vergennes that the crisis had come. He knew that the time was at hand for France to strike; to humiliate her ancient enemy and to regain her former position in the family of nations. He declared that France could now extend her commerce and fisheries without interference, and could assure the peaceful possession of her islands without the danger of British aggression.[15] "We must now either support the colonies or abandon them," he argued. "We must form the alliance before England offers independence, or we will lose the benefit to be derived from Amrica, and England will still control their commerce."[16] Independence was felt to be so important that France must recognize it even without the support of Spain.

Before Vergennes began war, however, he wished to secure the active cooperation of Spain. News of the sur-

[13]Stormount wrote October 1, 1777, that France would interfere within three or four months. (*F. O. France,* 550; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XIX, 1710.) De Noailles, French ambassador to London, wrote, January 31, that he saw hostile intentions in London. (*Ibid.,* XIV, 1421.) Stormount's protest were couched in threatening tone. See note 11.

[14]Vergennes to Noailles, August 30, 1777. (Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XVIII, 1666.)

[15]"Les avantages qui resulteroit de la [intervention] Sont innombrables nous humilierons notre enemi naturel, un ennemi perfide qui ne sont jamais respecter ni les Traites ni les droits des nations nous de tournerons a notre profit une des principales sources de son opulence nous ebranleons Sa puissance, et la reduirons a sa juste valeur nous etendions notre commerce, notre navigation, notre pêche, nous assurerons la possession de nos Isles, Enfin nous retablerons notre consideration et nous reprendrons parmi les Puissances de l'Europe la place qui nous apartient." "Consideration upon the necessity of France declaring at once for the American colonies." (*Angleterre,* 528, fol. 88; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XXI, 1835.) Unsigned; but the style is that of Vergennes and the opinions set forth are in strict accord with his policy.

[16]Vergennes to Montmorin, January 23, 1778. (*Esp.,* 588, no. 17, new 111.)

render of Burgoyne reached Paris on the night of December 7, 1777.[17] Four days later Vergennes sent a despatch to Montmorin, the new minister to Spain, asking for a Spanish alliance. He declared he would ask nothing hard of the Americans, only a treaty of commerce and the guarantee of French possesions in America; and he expected that Spain would ask nothing more.[18] Evidently he feared this would not be satisfactory to Spain, for on the thirteenth he wrote again: "Perhaps Spain still regrets the loss of Florida which gives to the English an easy access to the Gulf of Mexico." He doubtless knew that Arthur Lee had offered Florida to the Spaniards, but he cautiously continued: "I do not know what the Americans think in regard to this . . . . but it is natural to suppose that they would not hold very strongly to a thing they do not possess, and which, it seems to me, is not of much importance to them."[19] Vergennes had not yet seen the importance of the territorial question in the war. He was bidding for the help of Spain, but it did not occur to him to offer more of North America than the Floridas.

Montmorin sought out Florida Blanca, and asked for an alliance with the Americans. He presented the dangers of reconciliation and an attack by Americans and English combined upon Spanish America. He offered the Floridas, but the Spanish minister was unaffected. He declared that the Spanish fleet was poorly prepared for battle and would fall an easy prey to the English. To excuse his attitude he blamed the French for not going to war when he was ready. He further maintained that there was no danger of reconciliation; and, under no circumstances, would the king treat with rebels.[20]

In spite of the refusal of Florida Blanca, Montmorin

[17] *Esp.*, 587, no. 92.

[18] December 11. *Ibid.*, 587, no. 99.

[19] *Ibid.*, 587, no. 103.

[20] Montmorin to Vergennes, December 23. (*Ibid.*, 587, no. 125.)

believed that if France should enter the war Spain would be bound to follow.[21] His efforts, however, led to further rebuffs. At an interview on January 4, Florida Blanca declared angrily that there was neither object in beginning war nor plan in conducting it.[22] The aims of the Spanish minister, however, soon became apparent. To Aranda he wrote that France had much to gain from war, while for Spain there was nothing to gain and much to lose. France was looking to the conquest of the rich sugar isles, he continued, and possibly the fisheries of Newfoundland; but these could have no interest for Spain. The Spanish monarchy could have no other object, he insinuated, than the recovery of some of the "shameful usurpations" of Great Britain, "Gibraltar, Minorca, and to drive the English from the Gulf of Mexico, the Bay of Honduras, and the coast of Campeche."[23] Here was the program of Spain. It meant that she aimed not only at the Floridas in North America, but at the control of the Mississippi River, with both its banks as well. To this policy Florida Blanca adhered, and he did not enter the war until he had some assurance that it would be successful.

The British also were becoming aroused over the question of the territories. The debates in Parliament were long and bitter. Shelburne contended that if the rebellious colonies were to secure their independence they would not stop at that. He expressed his high opinion of the moderation of the American people, but declared that Congress looked further and was likely to inspire them with hopes of conquest and extent of dominion. "Should this be the case," he exclaimed, "the remainder of America must fall." He declared that the demands of the Ameri-

[21] *Esp.*, 587, no. 125.

[22] "Dans la chaleur d'une de nos conversations il m'a dit votre Cour veut traiter avec les Americains la guerre resulterset elle n'a ni objet en la commencement ni plan pour le faire." Montmorin to Vergennes, January 5, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 588, no. 1, new 7.)

[23] Florida Blanca to Aranda, January 13, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 588, no. 21.)

cans would ultimately lead to the loss of the West Indies and even of Ireland.[24]

Altho the British were determined to continue the war, if necessary, for the sake of peace, they were willing to offer any concession short of independence. To this end Hutton, chief of the Moravian Brethren in England and America, and a friend of both George III and Franklin, was sent to Paris. Franklin would consider no terms unless independence were granted; and he appealed to the magnaminity and good will of the British nation for a just settlement. "You should not only grant such as the necessity of your affairs may evidently oblige you to grant," he urged, "but such additional ones as may show your generosity and may thereby demonstrate your good will. For instance, perhaps you might, by your Treaty, retain all Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas. But if you would have a real friendly, perhaps able ally in America, and avoid all occasions of future discord, which will otherwise be continually arising on your American frontiers, you should throw in those Countries. And you may call it if you please, an Indemnification for the needless and cruel burning of their Towns, which Indemnification will otherwise be sometime demanded."[25]

In spite of the hesitancy of Spain, Vergennes pushed his plans for war. It was clear that peace could no longer continue, and English and French were expecting the outbreak of hostilities at any moment.[26] Vergennes was afraid that if France did not take part in the war in Amer-

[24]*Parliamentary Register,* X, 380. Benj. Vaughn to Franklin, April 28, 1778. (Franklin, *Works* (Smyth ed.), VII, 151.)

[25]Franklin, *Works* (Smyth ed.), VII, 100. The visit of Hutton created quite a stir in Paris and there was fear that he would succeed in affecting a reconciliation.

[26]Garnier, the French ambassador at London, wrote that England regarded herself as already at war; and on February 2, Sartine, the minister of marine, asked for an embargo on English ships in French harbors. Doniol, *Histoire,* II, 747. English statesmen knew of the proposed treaty on January 1. Wentworth to Eden, January 1. (Stevens, *Facsimiles,* III, 327.)

ica England would succeed in bringing about a reconciliation with her colonies and would then attack France.[27] On January 7 at a meeting of the cabinet, the whole situation was gone over. Vergennes presented a long memorial to the king in which he urged immediate war. "England," he declared, "must soon seek peace. She must grant independence, and will then seek compensation in a coalition with the United States for an attack on the two crowns." He declared that England would keep New York, and with that base could easily conquer the possessions of France and Spain, while the insurgent privateers would harry their commerce. The Americans, he urged, "will easily be led to go further by the bait of the riches of New Spain, sufficient to relieve both states of the burden of their debts. The exclusive navigation of the Mississippi which will make the possesion of Mexico precarious will, in itself, be a powerful inducement for the Colonies, and they will willingly undertake anything, because they will have nothing to fear on their continent from the vengeance of the two Crowns." Such an issue, he declared, would be realized at once if England would recognize the independence of America, and he urged war before it should be too late.[28]

The will of Vergennes prevailed and war was decided upon. Gerard de Rayneval Vergennes's secretary, was commissioned to treat with the Americans. Rayneval, like his master, strongly suspected the Americans of a willingness to be reconciled with the mother country, and his suspicions were heightened at his first interview with their representatives. Accordingly he lost no time in assuring them that the king would recognize their independence at once and make a treaty with them. He declared that France had in view no aggression, and wished only to enfeeble her enemy. He then urged the Americans not to be seduced by promises from England. To Franklin's query Rayneval

[27]Vergennes to Montmorin, January 16, 1778. (*Esp.*, 588, no. 23.)

[28]Vergennes: Paper submitted to the king and marked by him "apprové," January 7, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 588, no. 10, new 13.)

replied that France would not begin war until every other means of securing independence were exhausted. Franklin then stated that an immediate treaty alone would bar the Americans from negotiations with the British. This alarmed the French agent, and he assured Franklin that France would begin the negotiations at any time.[29]

The treaty of alliance between France and the United States was drawn on the lines agreed to by Rayneval and Franklin. It provided for mutual aid in the war, and declared that all conquests made on the continent of North America should belong to the United States, and France formally renounced all claims to any part of the former New France or Eastern Louisiana. In return for this renunciation she was to have all conquests made among the islands of the West Indies.[30]

The provisions regarding the territories were in accord with the instructions of the American Congress and did not, at any point, antagonize the policy of Vergennes. He still insisted that all France desired was the independence of the United States and the consequent enfeeblement of Great Britain.[31] The American commissioners were likewise satisfied, and wrote to Congress that the terms were such as they might readily have agreed to, if the United States were in a condition of full prosperity and established power.[32]

This treaty of alliance meant war. On March 10, Vergennes wrote to the French embassy at London enclosing a copy of the articles. The messenger arrived at his

[29]Rayneval said of the king "qu'elle etoient exempté de toute vue d'ambition et d'aggrandissement qu'elle ne vouloit qu'oper irrevocablement et completement l'independance des Etats Unis qu'elle y trouveouir l'interest essential d'affoibler son enemi natural . . . ." Narrative of Conference with American Commissioners, January 9, 1778. (*E. U., Memoirs et Documents,* I, no. 17; Stevens, *Facsimiles,* XXI, 1831.)

[30]*Treaties and Conventions,* 242.

[31]Vergennes to Montmorin, March 17, 1778. (*Esp.,* 588, 150, fol. 25.)

[32]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.,* II, 490.

destination on the 13th and on the 17th Great Britain declared war.[33]

When Vergennes signed the treaty of alliance with the United States he had good reason to think that Spain would soon accede to it. The historic kinship and union of the two crowns, their longstanding hatred of Great Britain, and their common interest in humiliating her, all induced Vergennes to expect a united front against the common foe. Furthermore, Spain had promised to aid France if Great Britain attacked her, and had often expressed her willingness for war. Altho during the few months preceding the treaty between France and the United States Spain had looked coldly upon the very suggestion of war, still, French statesmen thought she would join in the struggle as soon as it began.[34] Spain is anxious to recover some of her former possessions, they argued; and, if she will join with France, she will have an opportunity to make many rich and valuable conquests.

In spite of the urgings of the French, Florida Blanca still hesitated. France expected to gain much, he argued, in commercial advantages and prestige from a war with the British Empire, while Spain had only to calculate the probability of loss. She could expect nothing from the trade with the United States, and could gain no influence in European diplomacy if she allowed France to map out her policy. France could look to the conquest of English islands and the Newfoundland fisheries, he argued, and could hold them by her naval power; Spanish possessions were in great danger from the English navy, and it would be difficult to attain the objects of Spanish ambition: the recovery of Gibraltar and Minorca, and the expulsion of the British from the Gulf of Mexico.[35]

[33]Doniol, *Histoire*, II, 822.

[34]Montmorin wrote to Vergennes, March 30, 1778, that he did not doubt that, if France had any success, Spain would have her cupidity aroused and make an attempt to recover Florida and above all Gibraltar. (*Esp.*, 588, no. 175, new 21.)

[35]*Ibid.* Montmorin to Vergennes, March 30, 1778. (*Ibid.*, no. 175, new 21.)

There is no doubt but that the enmity of Spain for Great Britain was genuine and deep. The whole Spanish policy had been hostile to the British court. Spain had protested vigorously against the great armaments which England was sending to America and was correspondingly increasing her own; but in spite of this the Spanish monarchy was bent on peace. There were several reasons for this. Spain was mortally afraid of losing her colonies before the overwhelming power of the British navy. She realized that her finances were not in condition for war, and that they would be further crippled by cutting off the supply of precious metals from her American possessions. And then, as Florida Blanca declared, "between England and America there is a sort of equality of enmity that makes it difficult to desire that either side win."[36] He did make it clear, however, that the proper concessions might make Spain enter the war. The *sine qua non* of any arrangement, however, must include the Floridas. The Spanish were particularly desirous of this territory, because it controlled the entrance to the Gulf of Mexico which they wished to make a Spanish lake. It was a source of great annoyance to them that their ships could not get from New Orleans to the ocean without almost touching the coasts of an English province.[37] The Spanish desire to control the Gulf of Mexico made inevitable an attempt to get possession of the Mississippi Valley.

News of the conclusion of a treaty of alliance between the United States and France aroused in the mind of Florida Blanca the greatest apprehension. Spain had long

[36]Montmorin to Vergennes, February 2, 1778. (*Esp.*, no. 80, new 11.)

[37]"M. le Cte de Floride Blanche me disoit dernierement qu'il aimeroit mieux qu'on eut cedé la moitie de l'Amerique que la Floride en effet il ne peut rien sortir du golfe du Mexique, sans presque raser les côtés de cette province Quant a un etablissement a Terre Neuve, je crois qu'il souffririot bien des difficultes: vous pouvez etre sur, M que ces deux points formeront la baze des demandes de l'Espagne, si elle entre en negociation avec les Americains." Montmorin to Rayneval, February 2, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 588, no. 11.)

been the friend of France and he realized that it would be exceedingly difficult to maintain neutrality. "You believe that the actual circumstances are most happy for the two crowns," he cried to Montmorin; "I regard them as most fatal for Spain." Charles III listened patiently and courteously to Montmorin's explanations; but he declared that the situation was most critical and demanded the greatest caution.[38] Charles and his minister both believed, however, that Great Britain would soon attack the possessions of Spain and thus make war inevitable.

Vergennes maintained throughout a moderate attitude in his expectations for both France and Spain. He repeatedly declared that the sole desire of his country was to humiliate Great Britain and to raise her own prestige. He cared to add nothing to the colonial dominions of his country, but he was willing to bid high for the support of Spain. He had already suggested Florida as a suitable compensation for Spanish assistance, but he was soon convinced that he must offer more, and expressed his willingness to include Jamaica.[39] This was the beginning of a long series

[38]"Le lendemain . . . . j'ai été au Pardo communiquer a M. le comte de F. Blanche. Quoique j'eusse amené par differents preliminaires dont j'eusse a lui faire de la chose principale, je vous rendrait difficilement les different impressions que lui fit la lecture de votre depêche. Tous les sentiments dont il etait affecté se peignaient sur son visage et dans ses gestes. Je le voyais qui faisait inutilement des efforts sur lui meme pour se contraindre, tremblait de tout son corps, et il avoit toutes les peines du monde a s'exprimer . . . . vous croyez que les circomstances actuelles sont le plus heureuse pour les deux couronnes, et moi, je les regarde comme les plus fatales pour l'Espagne, ce join me paroitroit le plus beau de ma vie si Sa Majeste Catholique me permettoit de me retirer et d'aller finir mes jours tranquilement." Florida Blanca went on to blame Aranda for his part in the trouble but declared that the king would never consent to go to war. The king was much affected and declared "croyez-moi . . . . les circomstances sont bien critiques, et il faut bien de la prudence. Il n'en est pas de l'Espagne comme de la France." Montmorin to Vergennes, January 28, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 588, no. 58, new 9.)

[39]Vergennes to Montmorin, March 27, 1778. (*Esp.*, 588, no. 173, new 26.)

of ever-increasing bids on the part of France to be answered only by the ever-increasing demands from Spain.

In addition to making promises, Vergennes sought to show to the Spanish ministry the advantages of war. He urged that neutrality was dangerous, for England already had designs on Spanish America. With Great Britain mistress of all North America, she would always prove a dangerous neighbor, while there was nothing to fear from the United States, which would "remain quiet with the inertia that is characteristic of all constitutional democracies."[40] All these arguments, however, were unavailing. Spain maintained her policy of peace, and Vergennes turned his attention more towards the support of his new allies; but he did not give up hope of ultimately securing the cooperation of Spain. The instructions which he gave to Gerard, the first French minister to the United States, looked to the interests and ambitions of the Spanish court. Altho Gerard was not to speak for Florida Blanca, he was to use his influence with the Americans to get them to concede the Floridas, or at least Pensacola and those parts of the coast which would be of most "convenance" to Spain.[41]

The instructions which Vergennes issued to Gerard were not designed merely to serve Spanish ambition, but were in accord with the fundamentals of French policy. In recognizing the United States of America, Vergennes believed that he was erecting a powerful barrier against the dominance of the British Empire, while weakening it by lopping off an important member. He early recognized the impossibility of obtaining territories in America on account of the jealousy of the new republic, and he felt that France had no use for colonies which would drain the mother country of her population and wealth. Altho he did not seek any conquests in America, at the same time he did not wish to turn over all the British possessions

[40]Vergennes to Montmorin, April 3, 1778. (*Esp.*, 589, no. 4, new 27.)
[41]March 29, 1778. (*E. U.*, III, no. 77, fol. 159.)

there to the United States. He had recognized the new republic as a step in the downfall of Great Britain; and, in order to insure the permanency of his work, he felt that his ally must be kept in a state of permanent dependence.[42]

In the light of this belief Vergennes issued his instructions to Gerard. In regard to the propositions of the American commissioners that France should aid in the conquest of Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas, he declared that the king considered "the possession of these three countries, or at least of Canada, by England would be a useful cause of disquietude and vigilance to the Americans, which will make them see all the more the need which they have of the friendship and alliance of the king, and which it is not to his interest to destroy." He was not, however, wedded to the idea of limiting the boundaries of the United States. Gerard was left much discretion in this matter, and he was instructed that by all means he was to keep the good will of Congress. If that body proposed any conquests, he was to assure it of the friendship of the king, but was not to enter into any formal engagement to effect its desires. If the republic became too pressing, Gerard was not to refuse to cooperate, but he was to make it understood that the retention of such conquest need not be a condition of the next peace. In no case, however, was he bound by hard and fast rules, but was to use his discretion. That he did so is amply proven by the history of his career in America.

When Gerard arrived in Philadelphia, he found that the Spanish agent, Don Juan de Miralles, had preceded him. The two soon became confidential friends. Altho Miralles did not show his instructions to the French representative, he soon made evident the expectations of his court in regard to the West. He exerted himself to show the advantages which France might reap from the conquest of Canada, and declared the right of Spain to all the other territory which the English had acquired by the

[42]See p. 99, note 34.

treaty of 1763, and also to the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi River.[43] The suggestion that France should conquer Canada made no impression on Gerard; but he attempted to combat the ambitions of Miralles regarding the navigation of the Mississippi. He argued that the Americans already had claims to the back countries, and that in offering Pensacola to Spain they were intending to make good their claims to the West. He urged that Spain should not advance her demands at this time for by so doing she would merely bring on a dispute that might cause much trouble.[44] Miralles consented to postpone the issue and the matter of the territories was allowed to rest.

To Congress the treaty of alliance and the promise of French aid brought renewed hopes of the conquest of Canada. Washington had always been eager to get the British possessions along the St. Lawrence; and the failure of the early expeditions had not discouraged him. Gerard had promised the Americans both military and naval aid, and this was counted on to help in the expedition. Admiral D'Estaing arrived in America with a powerful fleet in July, 1778, and at once communicated with Gerard. He was planning to get St. John's or preferably Newfoundland

[43]"Il [Miralles] a parlé très affirmativement de la bonne volonté de l'Espagne et du secours immediat de la france Il s'est efforce d'etablir qu'il falloit que la france conquit le Canada et l'Espagne tout ce que les Anglois ont acquis par le traite de 1763 en floride et sur le Mississippi. . . . . il se livroit a toutes les speculations que la possession des florides et la navigation exclusive du Mississippi peuvent suggerer. J'ai été fâché de le voir mêler dans ses raisonnements la persuasion que les americains seroient bientôt les ennemis de l'Espagne. . . . . J'ai combattu cette persuasion par des motifs, Monseigneur que vous avez plusieurs fois discutes et j'ai observé qu'il paroitroit sage d'eviter au moins de les necessiter a le devenir immediatement. Je l'ai persuadé de representer a sa cour que jamais le congres ne consenteroit de plein gré a renouncer a la navigation du mississipi necessaire pour servir de debouche aux etablissements immenses que les americains se proposent de faire sur l'Ohio et autres rivieres affluentes." Gerard to Vergennes, July 25, 1778. (*E. U.*, IV, no. 41, p. 142.)

[44]*Ibid.*

on account of its fisheries. He declared, however, that he saw no chance of satisfying Spain, which was "possessed of a territorial mania and always felt herself ill used unless the compass of her territory was as large as the map." He suggested that the easiest solution would be to turn over St. John's and Newfoundland to the Americans and seek compensation for Spain and France elsewhere.[45] Gerard thought the proposition was worth serious consideration, and submitted it to Vergennes.[46]

Long before the project of invading Canada was formally considered Gerard was aware that it was likely to come up. On July 16 he wrote Vergennes of the whole affair, and described American apprehension of the dangers to the United States, if Great Britain were allowed to keep both Canada and the Floridas. He did not believe, however, that the Americans would demand the assistance of French troops in any conquest that they might attempt.[47]

In the fall of 1778 Washington began to prepare for his long cherished conquest of Canada. He expected to begin the invasion as soon as the British could be driven from their posts in the north. He considered the expedition of prime importance, but he was not very sanguine of success.[48] Lafayette also conceived a plan of his own for the invasion of Canada. He hoped to get enough assistance from France to make possible an attack by way of Detroit, another by Niagara, and still another up the Connecticut River, while the French fleet should sail up the St. Lawrence.[49] To his friend D'Estaing he wrote, "I can think of nothing but the happiness of being with you, of Halifax surrendering, of St. Augustine taken, of the British Islands on fire, and all confessing that nothing can

[45]Ct. d'Estaing to Gerard. (*E. U.*, IV, no. 22, fol. 95.)
[46]Gerard to Vergennes, July 15. (*Ibid.*, no. 20, fol. 90.)
[47]Gerard to Vergennes, July 16, 1778. (*Ibid.*, no. 23, fol. 97.)
[48]Washington, *Writings* (Ford ed.), VII, 192-198.
[49]*Memoires, Correspondance et Manuscrits des .... Lafayette.* I, 208.

withstand the French."[50] This was but an outburst of patriotic enthusiasm and was entirely opposed to the plans of Vergennes; but it was successful in arousing the interest of D'Estaing. Congress, too, was so carried away by the young Frenchman's enthusiasm that it gave favorable consideration to his plan, and ordered it transmitted to Franklin for submission to the minister of foreign affairs.[51] The Americans regarded the conquest of Halifax and Quebec as objects of the greatest importance, and in order to get the aid of France in this undertaking, they were willing to concede her a share in the fisheries and fur trade of that country. They reasoned that such an arrangement would give their frontiers greater safety and add two new states to the union.[52] To American inquiries, Gerard replied vaguely that the king had the greatest good will for the success of the Americans, but did not pledge the cooperation of his country. To Vergennes he expressed the belief that the expedition would not be undertaken, for he knew that Washington could not spare the troops.

The attack on Canada was soon abandoned, tho for other reasons than those given by Gerard. Admiral D'Estaing issued a proclamation to the Canadians urging them to rise against the common enemy and to unite with their neighbors to the south.[53] The proclamation suc-

[50]Towers, *Lafayette*, II, 14.

[51]*Journals of the Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XII, 1042.

[52]G. Morris carried on the negotiations with Gerard. He offered to give the French Newfoundland, if they would aid in the conquest of Halifax and Quebec. He pointed out that without the possession of Newfoundland France could never hope to get possession of the fisheries; and he promised that, if France would aid them, the Americans would attack at the same time all the points from the river of the Illinois to Quebec. Gerard hesitated from his knowledge that Washington must depend for his troops on the British evacuation of New York. Morris was distrustful of Spanish influence and observed that as long as Great Britain kept Canada she must be friends to the United States. In this he opposed the French argument that the British occupation of Canada was necessary to insure the friendship of the United States for France. Gerard to Vergennes, October 20, 1778. (*E. U.*, V, no. 33, fol. 68.)

[53]*Archives de la Marine*, B4.

ceeded in creating a feeling of uneasiness among the Canadians, but it gave a bad impression of French motives to Washington and Congress.[54] Washington at once wrote to Congress disapproving the whole scheme, as the army was not in condition to undertake it.[55] There were, however, other than military reasons why he wished to abandon this plan. In a personal letter to Laurens he gave as an insurmountable objection the "introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them into possession of the capital of that province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion, and former connection of government. I fear this would be too great a temptation," he wrote, "to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy." He feared that France in possession of Canada would become the most powerful maritime state of Europe, and joined by Spain in possession of New Orleans would make herself dictator of all America. If France should get possession of Canada no pledges could induce her to leave it; and she would drive the English from the seas and make the English speaking world her subjects.[56]

The opposition of Washington gave the death blow to the project of conquering Canada. Congress at once voted the expedition impractical and informed Lafayette of that fact.[57]

Vergennes regarded this proposed expedition as devoid of military significance. It may be of value as a military demonstration, he admitted, but France can not lend her weight to the annexation of Canada by the United

[54]Kingsford, *Canada,* VI, 330.

[55]Washington, *Writings* (Ford ed.), VII, 240.

[56]*Ibid.,* 261.

[57]*Journals of the Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XII, 1190-91.

States.[58] He wished to maintain the policy toward Canada which he had outlined in his first instructions to Gerard. He still preferred that England should keep it; but if the United States insisted on some acquisition he would give them Nova Scotia. In no case would he consent to make such conquests an excuse for continuing the war. "We think that peace ought not to depend on secondary matters," he wrote, "and that the only point important to the United States is the recognition of their independence. We do not hesitate to stipulate in favor of Great Britain for the preservation of her actual possessions in North America." As to the proposal of Miralles that France should seize Canada, Vergennes replied decidedly in the negative. Such a course, he argued, would arouse distrust of France and bring about a rapprochement between Great Britain and America which would make futile the whole war.[59]

Vergennes was not to show himself determined against the American occupation of Canada. He knew, however, the jealousy which Spain felt toward the United States, and he did not wish to take any stand that would arouse her displeasure. In February, 1779, he wrote to Gerard declaring that the question of Canada could not be determined until the close of the war; but in the meantime he was to "urge the Americans to make every effort in their power against the common enemy. It does not matter in what point," he continued, "but let them do all the harm they can. If they succeed in taking Quebec and Halifax,

[58]"Je ne sais si les americains forment seriusement le projet d'attaquer le Canada mais dans ce cas je doute qu'ils y reussissent. . . . . Cependant les Americains auront raisin de faire des demonstrations propres a faire prendre le change a la Cour de Londres. . . . . l'opinion de l'Espagne est qu'il conviendra de conserva le Canada et l'acadie a la grande Bretagne. . . . . Mais je le repete, c'est aux circonstances a consolider ou a modifier notre plan et nos vues." Vergennes to Gerard, November 18. (*E. U.*, V, no. 7, fol. 78.)

[59]Vergennes to Gerard, October 26. (*E. U.*, V, no. 43, fol. 105.)

well and good; and if this becomes a condition of peace, we can find other measures to reassure the court of Madrid."[60]

On the question of Canada, Washington and Vergennes held almost identical views. Both saw the difficulties of allowing France to get possession of the country, and both saw the injustice of asking the French to aid in a conquest for which they were to receive no compensation. Both realized the power which the possession of Canada would give to France, and both knew that with the French established on their northern borders the United States would inevitably return to the protection of Great Britain.

Of more vital importance to the United States was the question of the West. With it, in the minds of Spanish statesmen, were connected the Floridas, but these latter did not offer so difficult a problem. The United States had offered them to Spain in return for her assistance, but without success. Vergennes had dangled the possession of them before the hungry eyes of Spanish ministers, but his efforts were unavailing. It was tacitly understood, however, that Spain might have them any time she was willing to go to war with Great Britain. The Americans planned in the early part of 1778 to conquer the Floridas in the interest of Spain,[61] and there seemed to be no difference between the two countries regarding their disposition.

The West, however, was to prove a fertile ground for dispute. Florida Blanca had expressed his fear and hatred of the Americans, and had given this as the reason for not

[60]"Nous devons respecter l'opinion de l'Espagne, et elle n'est pas favorable aux desirs du Congres. . . . ." Vergennes urged Gerard "vous borner a exhorter les Americains a faire tous les efforts qui sont en leur pouvoir pour faire a l'ennemi commun n'emporte dans quel point, tout le mal qu'il sera possible. S'ils reussissent a s'emparer de Quebec et Halifax il faudra bien de leur laisser, si la paix devoit dependre de cette condition: on pourra au pis aller prendre d'autres mesures pour rassurer la cour de Madrid." Vergennes to Gerard, February 19. (*E. U.*, VII, no. 101, fol. 250.)

[61]Gerard to Vergennes, July 16. (*Ibid.*, IV, no. 23, fol. 97.)

joining in the war which would bring them independence. He was not content with mere inactivity. He felt that if Spain was to maintain her position in the New World she must do something to check the growing power of the young nation which was seeking to establish itself there. For this purpose he had suggested that the British be guaranteed the possession of Canada. To this end he had sought the title to the Floridas, but even this did not satisfy him. Spain should control the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River. This meant that the Americans must be barred from the whole area of the West.

On the question of the West, Vergennes did not at once commit himself. He recognized his obligations to his new allies and was anxious to get the assistance of Spain. He did not wish to offend the United States by an apparent favoritism to Spanish diplomacy, and he wished to get the confidence of Florida Blanca. Any arrangement which would be agreeable to the two powers, he was willing to accept.

# CHAPTER V

## FLORIDA BLANCA AND THE CONVENTION WITH FRANCE.

France alone was unequal to the struggle with Great Britain. For generations the two powers had been at war; and in every contest the final victory had lain with the island kingdom. It was difficult to believe that now, with the puny aid of a few revolting provinces, the Bourbon throne could blot out the defeats and humiliations of the past and triumph over its ancient rival. When Vergennes signed the treaty that called into life a new nation, the memory of 1763 directed his mind and the spirit of revenge guided his hand.[1] His rashness was self-evident. France was exhausted by a century of misrule at home and defeat abroad. Her finances were in wretched condition. Reform was urgent. Turgot declared that peace alone could work a cure.[2] Her navy, ruined in the Seven Years War, had never recovered its prestige and could not hope to fight the Britons on equal terms, and this was to be a naval war, a struggle on many seas.

Alliance with Spain was the hope of France. Their united fleets might well match that of Great Britain, and their combined resources were comparable to those of the enemy. Altho Spain had not approved the treaty of alliance, Vergennes felt he could count on her aid. The friendship of the Bourbon powers was of long duration, and sealed by treaties and family compacts. Together they had borne the humiliations and losses of many wars, and now Louis asked the cooperation of his Spanish cousin in

[1]"Il paroit en effet que la providence a marqué cette epoque pour l'humiliation d'une Puissance orgueilleuse, injuste, et avide, qui ne connoit jamais d'autre Loi que celle de son interit." Vergennes *au Roi,* marked "approve," Jan. 7, 1778, (*Esp.*, 588, new 22.) Doniol, *Histoire,* II, 765.

[2]Doniol, *Histoire,* I, 285.

what promised to be a Bourbon triumph. Spain wished to recover her ancient colonies; and it was a source of great humiliation to her that British guns guarded the gates of the Gulf of Mexico and the Mediterranean. A few months before, Florida Blanca had declared his readiness for the struggle, and had promised to back France when it should begin.[3] Altho the tone of Spain's communications had since grown cold, Vergennes felt that there were sufficient reasons to overcome her hesitancy and push her into war.

Spain, however, had other ends in view. War or peace, each promised great rewards. War, and France assured her magnificent conquests; peace, and she might exact from Great Britain even greater concessions. Friendship for France and hatred for Great Britain both urged her to war. But casting aside the motives of hatred and friendship there stood the solid advantages and rosy expectations of peace. In war Spain was open to attack from all sides. Her extended colonies were an easy prey to the powerful navy of England, which in the preceding struggle had made rich prizes of Havana and far-off Manila. The loss of her colonial possessions was a fear ever present to Spain, and she was determined to take no action that would endanger them. As Florida Blanca declared, "Spain has a vast empire unprotected by sea, which will be in great danger from British aggression."[4]

To Spanish statesmen there appeared still another danger in fighting for the cause of rebellious colonies. Even recently the colonies of Spain had been in rebellion. Only a few years before, Louisiana, just across the river from the Americans, had been ablaze with revolutionary ideas, and had broken forth in open revolt. The rebellion had been sternly repressed; but what effect would the success of English insurgents have on the restless inhabitants

[3]Ossun to Vergennes, September 6, 1777. (*Esp.*, 587, no. 33, new 113.)

[4]Montmorin to Vergennes, January 28, 1778. (*Ibid.*, no. 9, new 58.) Florida Blanca to Aranda, January 13. (*Ibid.*, no. 21.)

of Spanish America? King Charles, himself, feared that recognition of the new republic would set a dangerous example to his own possessions.[5] Still another question was whether the American states would be more peaceful neighbors as dependencies of the British Empire or as an independent nation. Florida Blanca feared that if they became independent they would be animated by a spirit of aggression which would be dangerous for Spain. Between Great Britain and the Americans there was, he declared, "a sort of equality of enmity which makes it difficult to prefer either of them."[6] If the colonists should succeed in their efforts, he expressed the hope that they be placed in dependence on the Bourbon crown and kept in a state of anarchy such as existed in Germany.[7] It was in vain that Vergennes pointed out the danger of an increase of British strength in the New World; it was useless to plead that such was the constitution of the new republic that it would more likely fall a prey to internal quarrels than become a danger to its neighbors.[8] Vergennes's arguments that there was a placid "inertia which is characteristic of all constitutional democracies" and which would inhibit the spirit of conquest did not convince the Spanish minister.

When Vergennes found he could not convince Florida Blanca of the advisability of war, he changed his tactics and began to try to push him by easy stages into taking a hostile attitude towards England. He offered the Spanish minister the use of ten vessels to protect Spanish commerce, but the offer was curtly refused.[9] He offered to entrust Gerard with any mission which Florida Blanca

[5]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 30, 1779. (*Esp.*, 593, no. 68, new 25.)

[6]Montmorin to Vergennes, February 2, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 588, no. 80, new 11.)

[7]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 20, 1778. (*Ibid.*, no. 157, new 19.)

[8]Vergennes to Montmorin, April 3, 1778. (*Ibid.*, no. 4, new 27.)

[9]*Ibid.*, 588, no. 157; Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, II, 491.

might wish him to perform in the United States.[10] His efforts seemed to offer some prospect of success, when in April, 1778, after the Mexican fleet had arrived with all its treasure, the Spanish ministry became belligerent in speech.[11] Altho Florida Blanca expressed his defiance of Great Britain, he resisted all French overtures. To Montmorin's insinuations that France was not seeking any conquests from the war, he replied that Vergennes was acting not from motives of prudence but of hate.[12]

The vacillating policy of Florida Blanca convinced Vergennes that he must buy the help of Spain. He had already offered her Jamaica and the right of fishing off the banks of Newfoundland, and had suggested that the Americans would be glad to help conquer the Floridas.[13] This offer did not satisfy Florida Blanca. He no longer seemed interested in these conquests, but began plotting for the recovery of Gibraltar, and placed that as an essential condition of Spain's participation in the war.[14]

Vergennes was not yet ready to concede so much; but he instructed Montmorin to find what else might be a favorite conquest for Spain.[15] To this query Florida Blanca gave no satisfactory answer. Vergennes then informed the Spanish minister that D'Estaing's fleet was ready to cooperate with the Spanish forces in an effort to seize Jamaica, Pensacola, the control of the Gulf of Mexico, or the Newfoundland fisheries.[16]

In regard to the Newfoundland fisheries, Florida Blanca answered curtly that by the treaty of 1763 Spain

[10]Vergennes to Montmorin, March 27, 1778. (*Esp.*, 588, no. 173, new 26.)

[11]Montmorin to Vergennes, April 30, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 589, no. 50, fol. 143.)

[12]Doniol, *Histoire*, II, 795.

[13]See pp. 74, 89.

[14]Montmorin to Vergennes, February 13, 1778. (*Esp.*, 588, no. 175, new 21.)

[15]Vergennes to Montmorin, April 10, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 589, no. 13, new 29.)

[16]*Ibid.*, 588, no. 173, new 26.

had renounced her pretentions to that region; and that she would not consider them again. As to the Floridas, he declared that the United States had offered them to the Catholic King two years before. He did not accept the offer of Vergennes to permit Gerard to look after the interests of Spain in America, because, he declared, Spain had nothing to contest with the United States, for the boundary between the two countries was marked by the Mississippi, which was definite enough. In short, Florida Blanca objected to everything France had done and disdained every offer France could make.[17]

Vergennes was bitterly disappointed at Spain's inactivity, and to disappointment was added alarm for fear that Great Britain might succeed in affecting a reconciliation with the insurgents. Reports had come to him that the British had offered the Americans full possession of the Floridas in return for a guarantee of their other provinces.[18] He foresaw that such an offer would be like "une pomme de discorde" between Spain and the United States. He was willing for the British to keep Canada, but he

[17]"ce ministre me repondit que l'Espagne avoit renouncé par le traité de Paris de 1763 à ses prétensions sur Terre neuve qu'ainsi il n'y falloit plus penser. Sa réponse fut apeuprès la même lorsque je lui fis part des instructions de M. Gerard. Il me dit que l'Esp n'avoit pa rien a demêler avec les Americains, sur ceque lui répliquai que je croijois que les possessions d'Amèrique Meridonale pouvoient avoir quelques relations avec ceux qui étoient les maitres de l'Amerique Septentrionale, il me repondit que les limites etoient fixees par le Mississipi et que c'étoit une ligne de frontier assez decidée. Je parlai de la reocupation de la Floride qui ne pouvoit avoir lien qu au moyen d'une convention préalable avec les Etats-Unis de l'Amerique. il dit que cet objet avoit dêja éte offert à l'Espagne il y avoit deux ans. En un mot M. le parti étoit pris dans cette prèmiere conversation de blamer tout ce qu'avoit fait la France de dedoigner toutes les offres qui pouvoient venir d'elle." Montmorin to Vergennes, April 10, 1778. (*Esp.*, 589, no. 15, new 23.)

[18]Frances to Vergennes, April 26, 1778. (*E. U.*, III, no. 103, fol. 224.) Frances was a secret agent of Vergennes in Paris. Vergennes was willing for the English to keep Canada, for this would forever bind the United States to France.

wished to make them surrender Halifax.[19] To avoid the dangers of a reconciliation, Vergennes once more urged Florida Blanca to accept the American offer of the Floridas and recognize the new government before it was too late to reap the credit.[20]

Florida Blanca declared once more in favor of peace. He felt there were too many difficulties in the way of conquering Gibraltar; while as to the Floridas, altho he felt that Spain ought to have them to keep the English out of the Gulf of Mexico, yet he would be content with the possession of Mobile and Pensacola. This much and even all the coast of Florida, he argued, should be granted his master without war. He was planning to mediate between the combatants and felt that, if he gave all Canada and perhaps other colonies to Great Britain that power would surely reward him handsomely.[21]

The policy of Florida Blanca was supported by Charles III, because that monarch sincerely desired peace. He felt also the danger to which his old time ally was exposing herself in the war with the British Empire, and strove his best to lead her back to peace. The efforts of Spain to effect a conciliation were encouraged by the British crown, which wished to keep that country neutral as long as possible; and it is by no means improbable that the first advances for mediation came at the suggestion of the court of London.[22] The French had no confidence in the new Spanish diplomacy, but, in order to keep the good will of the court of Madrid, they felt it necessary to encourage the negotiations. Thus with both belligerents indicating their willingness for mediation, Florida Blanca made his first suggestions for a settlement on the basis of independence for the United States and some minor con-

[19]Vergennes to Montmorin, May 1, 1778. (*Esp.*, 589, no. 54, new 32.)

[20]Consideration on the projects of Spain in case of war in America. In hand of Vergennes, June 20, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 589, no. 127, new 42.)

[21]Montmorin to Vergennes, June 22, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 589, no. 135, new 34, fol. 335.)

[22]Doniol, *Histoire*, III, 473.

cessions for France.[23] So certain was Charles III that these conditions would receive the assent of Great Britain that he asked the French to keep their fleet at home until a truce could be declared;[24] but it was not long until fresh English aggressions on Spanish commerce convinced King Charles that his efforts were futile.[25]

Vergennes had foreseen the failure of Spanish mediation and was prepared to make the most of it. At the first sign of British trifling, Montmorin came forward with a demand for action, guaranteed by the terms of the *Pacte de Famille,* and intimated that an unfavorable response would mean the dissolution of the alliance.[26] Charles III was deeply wounded by the failure of his efforts, and severely disappointed at not receiving the Floridas, which he regarded as his due; and, while in this state of mind, he began to listen favorably to the pleadings of the French ambassador. Montmorin felt exultant at his success and wrote Vergennes that if France would guarantee Gibraltar and the Floridas, the alliance was secure.[27]

The British were alarmed at the new drift of Spanish policy and at once revived the idea of mediation.[28] This time Charles was wary and insisted that he would not again offer his good offices unless the court of London formally requested him to do so. This the British government agreed to do,[29] and Charles decided to try again. Montmorin had previously declared that the British were merely trying to amuse Spain, and now he wrote that they had succeeded. Vergennes, on his part, agreed at once to the proposition of mediation; for he wished to maintain a character for

[23]Montmorin to Vergennes, July 1, 1778. (*Esp.,* 590, no. 2, new 36.)

[24]Doniol, *Histoire,* III, 472.

[25]*Ibid.,* 509.

[26]Vergennes to Montmorin, August 7, 1778 (*Esp.,* 590, no. 72, new 52); August 15 (*ibid.,* no. 87, new 53.)

[27]*Ibid.,* no. 89, new 49.

[28]Montmorin to Vergennes, August 31, 1778. (*Ibid.,* 590, no. 49, new 121.)

[29]Doniol, *Histoire,* III, 513.

disinterestedness.[30] The French were soon convinced, however, that Charles III decidedly favored their views as to the terms of settlement, and that he would oppose leaving the British in possession of any important stronghold near the American possessions of the two crowns.[31] With this assurance Vergennes was satisfied, and Spain entered upon her office of mediation.

At the request of Charles III Vergennes drew up a statement of the terms which he would insist upon as the necessary conditions of peace. The first requirement was the recognition of independence for the United States, with which must be included New York, Long Island, and Rhode Island, and such other parts of the original colonies as were in the hands of the British. France asked no colonies in North America, but declared her willingness to allow Great Britain to keep Canada, while the Floridas should go to Spain.[32]

All these suggestions were agreeable to Florida Blanca. He particularly desired that the English should keep Canada. He argued that they were so enfeebled by the war that they would no longer be dangerous to the two crowns, while their possession of that country would prove a constant source of friction between them and the United States and keep the latter loyal to France and Spain.[33]

In regard to the new republic, Vergennes did not hesitate to express himself clearly. "All my correspondence for several months," he wrote, "has proven to Florida

[30]Vergennes to Montmorin. (*Esp.*, 590, no. 51, new 48.)

[31]Montmorin to Vergennes, September 29. (*Ibid.*, 590, no. 188, fol. 458.) Charles indicated that he would approve the chief French demands; the independence of the United States and the expulsion of the English from Dunkirk. Montmorin did not doubt that Spain would seek to get the British out of the way of their commerce but he thought she would leave them Canada.

[32]Vergennes to Montmorin, October 8, 1778. (*Ibid*, 591, no. 62.)

[33]Montmorin to Vergennes, October 19, 1778 (*ibid.*, 591, no. 33, new 61); October 15 (*ibid.*, no. 22, new 60).

Blanca that we do not differ from him in principles. . . . . We ask only independence for the thirteen states of America, without including any of the English possessions which have not taken part in the rebellion. We do not desire that a new republic shall arise which shall become the exclusive mistress of this immense continent." Such a case, he feared, would make the new republic a hard taskmaster for the other nations of the world. He agreed, too, that it was best to leave Canada in possession of the English to make the Americans perceive the necessity of having "des garants, des allees, et des protecteurs." The Floridas, or at least West Florida, Vergennes thought should go to Spain, as they were in no sense connected with the other provinces.[34]

On this much, Spain and France agreed; but here the likeness ends. With France, independence for the United States was the prime condition of the war; with Spain, an extension of her empire was the chief aim. Vergennes regarded the United States as a friend and ally to

[34]"Nous ne demandons l'independance que pour les treize Etats de l'Amerique que seront unis entre eux, sans y comprendre aucune des autres possessions angloises qui n'ont point participe a leur insurrection. Nous ne desirons pas a beaucoup près que la nouvelle Republique que s'eleve demeure maitresse exclusive de tout cet immense continent. Bientot suffisant seule a ses besoins, les autres nations seroient dans le cas de compter avec elle, parceque pouvant se passer de toutes, elle leur feroit tres certainment une loi tres dure. . . . . Neamoins, il n'en est pas moins interessant que les Anglois demeurent mâitres du Canada et de la Nouvelle Ecosse, ils feront la jalousie de ce peuple, qui pourroit bien se retourner ailleurs et de lui faire sentir la necessité d'avoir des garants des allees, et des protecteurs. Quant au partage que M. le comte de floride blanche desiroit qui fut fait des Florides dont l'occidentale devroit revenir a l'Espagne, vous vous rappelerez M. quels ont ete notre vue et notre interet, et que ne pouvoit pas stipuler pour cette Couronne nous avons posé dans l'acte separe du traite d'alliance une preuve d'attente sur laquelle elle pourroit edifier un jour." Vergennes thought that the dominant spirit of the Americans was that of trade, and this, he thought, would be less dangerous to their neighbors. Vergennes to Montmorin, October 30, 1778. *(Esp.,* 591, no. 43, new 67; Circourt, III, 310; Doniol, *Histoire,* III, 561.)

be treated generously; Florida Blanca regarded them as a rival and enemy, to be restricted in boundaries and subject to the restraints of Spanish ambition. He preferred to leave the British in possession of New York or other strongholds from which they might annoy the American republic.[35]

While Vergennes was willing that Canada should remain in British hands he would by no means consent to the Spanish demand that such a settlement should be guaranteed.[36] He favored rather the pushing northward of the American boundaries. On the question of allowing the British to keep some posts within the limits of the thirteen colonies he took a decided stand. "We can not think," he wrote, "of letting any of the states, either New York or Rhode Island, remain in dependence on Great Britain without contradicting our first principles;" and he firmly maintained that if this was not agreed to he would not make peace.[37]

[35]Florida Blanca declared that the question of these posts demanded much reflection. It would be difficult, he reasoned, to get the Americans to consent to such terms and "il fut persuadé que les Anglois n'en tireroient jamais aucune utilité, ces places devenant entre leurs mains a piu près ce que sont les presides d'Afrique dans celles des Espagnoles." Montmorin to Vergennes, October 19, 1778. (*Esp.*, 591, no. 33, new 61.)

[36]Florida Blanca insisted that such an arrangement should be made. Montmorin objected that with the English in possession of Halifax they could prey upon the commerce of the United States and threaten the possessions of the two crowns. He also feared that the United States would not consent to such an arrangement. The Spanish minister replied that after the war the English would be too feeble to be dangerous, and they would be still less so if they could arouse between them and the Americans some permanent sources of division. For this reason Canada and Acadia must be left to the British. As to the United States, he declared they had need of peace and must accept whatever was given them. Montmorin declared that he feared greatly the prosperity and progress of the Americans. Montmorin to Vergennes, October 19, 1778. *(Ibid.)*

[37]"Il faudra renoncer a la paix, monsieur, si les Anglois mettoient pour condition qu'ils conserveroient New-York ou telle autre place ou territoire dependant des treize Provinces unis de l'Amerique." Vergennes to Montmorin, October 17, 1778 (*ibid.*, 591, no. 25, new 63; Circourt, III, 307); November 2, 1778 *(Esp.*, no. 68, fol. 118).

In spite of these differences Vergennes did not cease his efforts to involve Spain in the war. He ridiculed the idea that the United States would ever become dangerous as neighbors of Spain, and declared that the Spanish monarchy had much more to fear from the aggressions of Great Britain.[38] His efforts, however, were unavailing, and he decided to guarantee Canada and Nova Scotia to Great Britain and the Floridas to Spain.[39]

Other causes were forcing Spain to the position of France. Great Britain had treated with contempt the offers of Charles III to mediate, even after she had made the first suggestion. Florida Blanca was convinced that the English were merely seeking to gain time, and that their intentions were hostile.[40] New reports arrived of British aggressions in America. In the Gulf of Honduras and the Bay of Campeche, they were becoming more insolent; and they were suspected of trying to incite an uprising in Louisiana.[41] There was no prospect that Great Britain would surrender the Floridas, and the ever-increasing fleets that hung around Gibraltar was an added source of irritation.

The condition of France was becoming desperate. D'Estaing had suffered reverses in America and the insurgents were driven out of Rhode Island. The French treasury could with difficulty stand the strain and it was evident that something must be done at once. Vergennes de-

[38]"C'est gratuitement quon voit dans ce peuple nouveau une race de conquerans." Vergennes to Montmorin, October 19, 1778. (Doniol, *Histoire,* III, 559.)

[39]Vergennes sent sketch of proposed treaty to Spain, October 17, 1778. (*Esp.,* 591, no. 25, new 63.)

[40]"M. de Florideblanche . . . . pense comme vous que les Anglois ne cherchent qu'a gagner du tems et qu'il faut nous preparer ensemble a la guerre pour le prentems . . . . Il est sans aucune confiance dans la negociation pour la paix . . . ." Montmorin to Vergennes, November 12, 1778. (*Esp.,* 591, no. 52; Doniol, *Histoire,* III, 575.)

[41]Montmorin to Vergennes, November 4. (*Esp.,* 591, no. 54, new 67.)

cided that he must accept the Spanish conditions, for assistance was indispensable.[42]

Altho Florida Blanca still feared war, he thought its dangers were no longer as great as were those of peace. He declared his willingness still to negotiate; but he said it must be on terms honorable to the two crowns.[43] He spoke of war with "la chaleur et l'espece d'enthousiasme" and Montmorin was convinced that there would be no further difficulty.[44]

Altho Florida Blanca was expecting war, he wished to wring a few more concessions from his ally before committing himself. Vergennes had consented to assist the Spaniards to recover Gibraltar, Minorca, Jamaica, and Florida, and to help drive the English from Honduras and Campeche,[45] but this did not satisfy the minister of Charles III. He could ask no more gains in territory, so he turned his efforts to crippling the United States. News had arrived at Madrid in June, 1778, that the Americans had captured two British forts on the Mississippi and were threatening Florida.[46] This information doubtless increased the cupidity and jealousy of the Spanish court, for its tone became immediately more hostile to the Americans. Soon afterwards rumor credited the Americans with complete success in Florida,[47] and Vergennes again urged Florida Blanca to recognize the United States while there was yet an opportunity to reap some advantages. News

[42]Vergennes to Montmorin, November 2. (*Esp.*, 591, no. 68, fol. 118.)

[43]"Dans le courant du mois prochain nous verron clair si on veut nous amuser, ou si l'on desire reelement la paix. dans le second cas, il faut faire la paix, mais honorablement et utilement pour les deux Couronnes." Montmorin to Vergennes, on interview with Florida Blanca, "ses propres paroles," October 26, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 591, no. 52; Circourt, III, 309.)

[44]En un mot, Monsieur, je suis convaincu que le mois prochain ne se passera pas sans nous ayons commencé a concerter le plan que nous executerons au printems prochain." *Esp.*, 591, no. 52.

[45]Vergennes to Montmorin, December 24, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 591, no. 154.)

[46]Galvez reported this to the Spanish court. Montmorin to Vergennes, June 1, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 589, no. 98, new 30.)

[47]Vergennes to Montmorin, July 6. (*Ibid.*, 590, no. 12, new 45.)

soon arrived, however, that the Americans were repulsed and had retreated to Louisiana. This confirmed the poor opinion which the Spaniards held of the insurgents, but placed them also in a difficult position with reference to the British court. Galvez refused to surrender the fugitives[48] and the English became threatening. They built a fort at Manchac on the Mississippi, which not only protected the Floridas but threatened New Orleans as well.[49]

Vergennes pointed out the danger of the English movements, but Spain still held back. Florida Blanca was now thoroly alarmed, however, and resolved to get ready for war.[50] In spite of his hatred of the British, he declared that his master would never enter into an alliance with the Americans, nor even recognize them,[51] for they were likely soon to become an enemy.[52] Neither English nor Americans, he asserted, should come near Spanish territory, and he announced his determination to drive them both from the Mississippi Valley.[53]

Altho Vergennes regarded the Spanish demands as "gigantesque," he agreed to all of them except the proposal to give to Spain the Mississippi Valley. He said nothing to Florida Blanca of the West, but to Gerard he

[48]Montmorin to Vergennes, July 6. (*Esp.*, no. 14, new 38.)

[49]Vergennes wrote of this: "suivant les renseignments qu'on me donne il a le double objet de couvrir la Floride Occidentale et de chasser les Espagnoles de la droite de cette riviere en cas de guerre." July 17. (*Ibid.*, 590, no. 36, new 47.) Aranda pointed out the same danger to his court, July 20. (*Ibid.*, no. 45.)

[50]Montmorin to Vergennes, November 29. (*Ibid.*, 591, no. 72, new 67.)

[51]Florida Blanca declared that Charles III could never extend recognition to rebels. Montmorin to Vergennes, August 17, 1778. (*Ibid.*, 590, no. 89, new 49.)

[52]Same to same, November 12. (*Ibid.*, no. 70.)

[53]*Ibid.* "M. de Floride-Blanche veut reprendre la Floride: il veut chasser les Anglois et les Americains des deux rives du Mississipi." Same to same, November 20. (*Ibid.*, new 72; Doniol, *Histoire*, III, 585.)

expressed his astonishment at Spanish greediness.[54] Vergennes also insisted that the prime object of the war should be the independence of the United States, and to this the Court of Madrid refused to give its assent. Florida Blanca argued that such a clause in their agreement was out of place and useless; out of place because Spain could make her own arrangements with the United States, and useless because the independence of that country was the first and only cause of the war.[55]

The discussion of a convention between the two countries dragged on during the early months of 1779. Florida Blanca, in rejecting the plan submitted by Vergennes, promised to draw up one himself, but had offered excuse after excuse for delay. He complained that the Americans were not aggressive enough in conducting the war. He feared that they would seek to annex Canada, and it was desirable that this province should remain in English hands. To all these objections Vergennes returned the strongest assurances of his willingness to meet the desires of Spain and declared that his minister to Congress would labor to deter the Americans from an invasion of Canada and would urge them to a more vigorous policy against Great Britain.[56] Florida Blanca objected that France was less anxious for the advantages of Spain than for the independence of the United States. Vergennes had declared that this independence was the prime object of the war, but in order to satisfy Spanish pride he offered to express the two clauses in the same terms.[57] Spain still dallied with

[54]Regarding the demand of the United States for the right to navigate the Mississippi and the objections of Spain, Vergennes wrote: "et je vous assure qu'il me paroitroit étonnant qu'on refusât à cette demande." October 26, 1778. (*E. U.*, V, no. 43, fol. 119.)

[55]Vergennes proposed a convention, article 4 of which declared that war should continue until the independence of the United States was secured. (*Esp.*, 592, no. 105.) Florida Blanca complained because independence was made more definite than the other objects of the war. Montmorin to Vergennes, February 28, 1779. (*Ibid.*, no. 140, new 14.)

[56]Vergennes to Florida Blanca, March 18, 1779. (*Ibid.*, 593, no. 33, fol. 81.)

[57]Doniol, *Histoire*, III, 634.

the terms of the convention and the attitude of Vergennes became daily more importunate. He wrote letter after letter to Montmorin explaining the pressing needs of France and the necessity of immediate aid from Spain.[58]

To the offer of Vergennes to express in the same terms the articles on the advantages to be given Spain and that on the independence of the United States, Spain interposed another objection. Florida Blanca insisted that Spain could never recognize the independence of the American republic until England had done so, for fear that such recognition would set a bad example to the Spanish colonies in America. He declared he could go no farther than to give secret aid to Congress.[59]

To this argument Montmorin replied that the recognition of independence would not be so bad an example as the giving of secret aid. The maneuvres of Spain aroused in the mind of Vergennes the greatest indignation, and he wrote bitterly of a "minister who most often puts caprice in place of reason." He likewise denounced the objections of Spain to recognize the independence of the United States. "Nothing is gratuitous on the part of Spain," he wrote. "We know that she wants concessions from the Americans, as well as from us." He did not oppose this, but he regarded it as absurd that France should guarantee possessions to a nation so powerful as Spain. He vigorously declared that France would not lower her honor or dignity by entering into a convention nullifying the treaty of February, 1778, and that if Spain joined France she must do so with that understanding.[60]

Spain had exhausted her objections to the alliance and finally in April began to formulate her demands. Her first proposition was that the two powers should agree not to lay down arms until the English had surrendered Gibraltar. All other conquests, however, were to be subject

[58]Doniol, *Histoire*, III, 634.

[59]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 30, 1779. (*Esp.*, 593, no. 68, new 25, fol. 157.)

[60]*Esp.*, 593, no. 41. Doniol, *Histoire*, III, 672.

to the fortunes of war. This project did not definitely recognize the independence of the United States, but made it a subject of negotiation (Art. 4). Article five granted the same advantages to France as had the convention previously submitted by Vergennes. It provided for the abolition of the articles of the peace of Utrecht, restricting France from fortifying Dunkirk and such other places as she wished to fortify; the expulsion of the English from Newfoundland, the possession of St. Domingo, and Senegal, besides various commercial advantages. Article seven proposed for Spain the recovery of Gibraltar, the possession of Mobile and the restitution of Pensacola and the coast of Florida along the "Bahama Canal" so that no foreign power could get any foothold there, the expulsion of the English from Honduras and Campeche, and the restitution of the isle of Minorca.[61]

In the discussion of this convention Montmorin expressed his surprise at Spain's demand for the restitution of Minorca, for before this she had apparently attached little importance to it. Florida Blanca replied to his objections that this acquisition would be of little importance if the others were granted. To the extent of the coast of Florida desired by Spain Montmorin objected. Before this Florida Blanca had asked only for Mobile and Pensacola, but now he desired all the shore around the south end of the peninsula and some distance up the east coast. The Spanish minister, however, insisted that all this was essential to assure the navigation of the Gulf of Mexico.[62] From the negotiations preceding this convention Montmorin decided that it did not seriously sacrifice the interests of France and accepted Florida Blanca's suggestion that they sign at once.

[61]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 30, 1779. (*Esp.*, 593, no. 68, new 25, fol. 157.) Text of this convention in Doniol, *Transcripts, Nou. Acq. Francs.*, 6488, 189; Doniol, *Histoire*, III, 803.

[62]Montmorin to Vergennes, April 13, 1779. (*Esp.*, 593, no. 112, new 31, fol. 255.)

The articles relating to America did not contradict the previous understanding as to the settlement of affairs in the New World. Congress had already offered Spain the Floridas and could not object to the article in the convention regarding them. There was nothing in the convention to imply Spanish control over the Mississippi river and valley, and no limitations on the boundaries of the United States. The provision that France should not lay down arms until the restitution of Gibraltar was secured has been most criticized[63] on the ground that it bound the United States to continue a war in the interests of Spain. The treaty between the United States and France provided that neither power should make peace until independence was secured, and no treaty was to be signed without the consent of both nations. There is no evidence that France ever sought to use this clause to further her own or Spain's ambitions, and she never held the United States bound to help regain Gibraltar. Nor did the Americans have the means to aid in such a project, as they could act only on the defensive and with the expulsion of the English they could do nothing more.

France herself received no adequate compensation for the concessions she made to secure the alliance of Spain. The right to fortify Dunkirk was no equivalent for the guarantee of Gibraltar, and the other promises that the crowns made to each other bore almost the same degree of relative importance. Vergennes, however, approved the signing of the convention, and looked eagerly forward to the time when the French navy, reinforced by that of Spain, should sweep the English from the seas. Florida Blanca began hostilities at once, and commenced with vigor the first campaign, which he believed would end the struggle. Across the Atlantic the new republic was striving not only for independence from Great Britain, but was also laboring to protect its integrity from the grasping ambition of Spain.

[63]Bancroft, *United States,* V, 308; Van Tyne, *American Revolution,* 312.

# CHAPTER VI

## DEVELOPMENT OF A CONGRESSIONAL POLICY TOWARD THE WEST.

News of the signing of the treaty of alliance with France produced throughout the United States a feeling of joy and hope. There were some who objected to receiving aid from the ancient enemy of the English race, but there was almost universal expression of satisfaction. The intervention of France, however, was to prove the source of a new anxiety to patriotic Americans. It meant that Congress must work out a policy in regard to the disposition of the West. What should be the western boundaries of the new nation? Should it have the right freely to navigate the Mississippi River? These questions were closely connected and presented themselves together. Great Britain and Spain as well as the United States had interests there. Within Congress there were hostile factions, each with a very definite view of the question; and upon these factions the adroit and ingratiating Gerard played with varying success.

Gerard had definite instructions regarding Canada and the Floridas; but he had not been given a line as to what attitude France would take respecting the ownership of Eastern Louisiana or the navigation of the Mississippi River. He could only act upon his instructions to look after the interests of Spain. If that country would be benefited by the complete control of the Mississippi Valley, Gerard might well argue that he should work to this end. On the other hand, he was to do nothing to incur the ill will of Congress, and so he could not feel at liberty freely to oppose the designs of the Americans towards the West.

Thus Gerard felt compelled to play a double game. When Miralles proposed the extension of Spanish power

over the West, he opposed it as unreasonable, and declared that Congress would never consent to such an arrangement; but to his own court he suggested that if Spain would seize the course of the Mississippi below the mouth of the Ohio, the negotiations would be much simplified.[1]

The scheme of Miralles was based on the idea of restricting the territory of the United States and thus making them dependent on the good will of the two crowns. He considered the Americans as dangerous as the British, and believed they would show their hostility at the first opportunity.[2] Gerard assured his friend of the good disposition of the Americans and suggested to Congress that, in order to reassure Spain, it should pass a resolution declaring an enemy of the Confederation any state which should seek to extend its borders beyond "certain limits."[3] Gerard informed Morris, the secretary of Congress for foreign affairs, that Spain was afraid of the great numbers of English who had established themselves on the Mississippi, and also of the Indians who had been driven westward by the Americans. They were a serious menace, he declared, to the Spanish frontier, and a cause of constant jealousy, while the designs of Congress upon the Floridas had

[1] *E. U.*, V, 35.

[2] Miralles proposed to Gerard that France should seize Canada and Spain should have the West and the Floridas. He gave as his reasons that the United States would soon become the enemies of Spain. Gerard opposed his opinions on this score, but declared that Congress never would consent to the Spanish terms. He pointed out the American expeditions to the West, and advised Miralles that if he hoped to realize his ambitions he must not place the Americans in a position to formulate their demands. Gerard to Vergennes, July 20, 1778. (*Ibid.*, IV, no. 41, fol. 97.)

[3] Gerard stated that several members of Congress approved this suggestion and that one offered to make a motion to that effect. He expressed high opinions of the fairness and justice of Congress, and of its desire to satisfy Spain. Same to same, September 11. (*Ibid.*, no. 114, fols. 311-316.)

aroused in the Spanish court great anxiety and alarm.[4] He suggested that Congress should give some guarantee to Spain of its moderation, and should formally renounce in her favor St. Augustine, Mobile and Pensacola, together with the navigation of the Mississippi.

Gerard was gradually led to this position by the urgency of Miralles and the indifference of Morris. There was nothing in the instructions of Vergennes to warrant such a stand, but the American secretary was willing to agree to the full demands of the Spanish court. Morris admitted that the anxiety of Spain was founded on reason as far as some sections of the country were concerned, but asserted that there were no grounds to fear the Confederation as a whole. He confided that he and several of his colleagues were impressed with the necessity of establishing a law of *concendo imperio* which would prevent any additions to the states already in the union. If Spain had the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi, he argued, the immense population which would form along that river and the Great Lakes could more easily be held in subjection to the East. On the other hand, if this population should hold control of the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, he expressed the belief that it would soon dominate both the United States and Spain. As for the Floridas, Morris declared that Congress would cede them to Spain for a money compensation; for he urged that there was also great danger of southern aggression. In Canada, however, he showed great interest, and used every effort to get France to assist in its conquest.[5]

[4]Gerard carefully refrained from admitting any knowledge of the wishes of Spain and claimed to speak only from general conditions. He thought that Spain had good reason to fear the American spirit of adventure, and pointed out the dangers to Spain of the American western policy. Gerard to Vergennes, October 20. *(E. U.,* V. no. 33, fols. 68-84.)

[5]Gerard to Vergennes. *(Ibid.)* Morris urged that unless the English were driven out of Canada the French could never hope to have any share in the fisheries, and he offered to help put Newfoundland into French hands. He declared that with Canada in British hands the United States must remain dependent on the British Empire.

Gerard objected to Morris that there were many Americans who insisted upon the right to navigate the Mississippi, and suggested that there might be many difficulties in turning it over to Spain. To this the secretary for foreign affairs replied, that those who held to such demands were actuated by their financial interests, and that if the matter were presented in its true light to Congress he could hope for much. It is noteworthy that in all this discussion Gerard did not once suggest that Spain should be given Eastern Louisiana. Against the wishes of the Spanish court and without any support from the Americans he was willing to leave this territory to the new republic. But with the consent of Congress, Spain should have the Floridas and the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi River.

Until the fall of 1778 Vergennes had taken no position regarding the West. He admitted that he did not understand the question. His attitude towards the United States was not illiberal. When he heard of the Spanish claims to the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi he expressed his surprise. He left the decision as to the attitude of France in this dispute to Gerard, who should understand the claims of both parties. If it appeared to the latter that Spain could justly maintain her pretention, he was to win over Congress; but if it appeared that the Americans had the right to navigate the river, he was to urge their claim on the court of Madrid.[6]

Vergennes expressed no objections to the American possession of the West, but protested against any project

[6] "je veux parler de la navigation du Mississipi; . . . . je juge par la situation des lieux que les Americains insisteront sur la liberté de la navigation du Mississipi à cause des etablissements qu'ils propose de former sur l'Ohio, et je vous assure qu'il me paroitroit etonnant qu'on refusât à cette demande. Cependant il peut y avoir pour la negative des considerations locales que j'ignore et peuvent meriter quel qu'attention . . ." Vergennes to Gerard, October 26. (*E. U.*, V, no. 43, fol. 105; Doniol, *Histoire*, III, 569.)

of giving Spain anything except the Floridas.[7] When he received Gerard's account of his negotiations with Morris, he gave his approval of the action of the French representative. He believed that the United States never should and never would undertake any conquests, and he urged Gerard to persuade Congress that it was not for the interest of the republic to extend its possessions. Any aggression, he declared, would arouse jealousies and would forfeit the protection of the powers, who alone could guarantee to the United States their political existence.[8] The chief end of the war, he contended, was American independence; and when that was attained the question of territories could easily be decided.[9]

Gerard sought to carry out the instructions of his master. He urged Congress to pacific measures toward Spain, and begged it to renounce all idea of conquest except such as it could make from the English, and to be content with the territory it already had.[10] Between Spain and the United States he urged that there should be an established line of separation. He declared that all Europe was suspicious of the new nation, and urged Congress to make clear its pacific intention. His efforts were not in vain, for several members of Congress agreed with him, and

[7]"Cet agent [Miralles] croit qu'il seroit d'une bonne politique que nous serassions les colonies par le Nord tandisque l'Espagne les serreroit par le Sud. Vous savez que nous sommes d'une opinion contraire. . . . ." *(E. U.,* V, no. 43, fol. 105.)

[8]Vergennes to Gerard, November 18. *(Ibid.,* V, no. 78, fol. 179.)

[9]"le seul point qui importe aux Etats-Unis c'est de faire reconnoitre leur independance par la Grande Bretagne." October 26. (*Ibid.,* no. 43, fol. 105.)

[10]"qu'il me sembloit en general qu'il convenoit qu'ils se hatassent de fixer d'une maniere positive et authentique aux yeux de tout l'univers le caractère paisible qui doit être inherent à une republique telle que la leur; qu'en marquent un desir permanent de la paix et une résolution arrêtee de renouncer a toute conquête et de se contenter de leur territoire et des conqüêtes qu'ils pourroient faire sur les Anglois." Gerard to Vergennes, December 12. (*Ibid.,* V, no. 46, fols. 301-316.)

some even declared that their country was already too large to be well governed.[11]

While the discussion of the disposition of the West was being carried on, the Americans were trying to make good their rights by force of arms. Already they had established themselves in Kentucky and Tennessee, while the British were confined to a few posts along the Great Lakes and some of the rivers of the Northwest.[12] So strong were the Americans that they were able to repulse a number of raids led by the British into this country and to bid defiance to any attempts to conquer them.

In the Southwest Galvez, the Spanish governor of New Orleans, had been from the first a friend to America and an enemy to Great Britain. He allowed Captain Willing of Philadelphia to establish military headquarters in New Orelans, where he could fit out expeditions, recruit men and issue seditious proclamations to the English settlers in Florida and along the Mississippi. Galvez openly furnished ships to carry supplies up the Mississippi, and aided all sorts of plans against the British in the West.[13] He even furnished money and supplies to Willing for an expedition against Mobile.[14]

The expedition of Major Willing against the Floridas attracted much attention. Galvez wrote in glowing terms of the bravery and success of the Americans. Gerard reported the undertaking less favorably as led "by a young fool, who in a commercial expedition has drawn the English from a great part of the Mississippi."[15] In Europe,

[11]"Le President et un delegué de Virginie convenrent de la justesse de mes remarques, et que leur empire etoit deja trop grande, pour esperer qu'il put etre bien gouverné." Gerard to Vergennes, December 22. *(E. U.,* V, no. 47, fol. 349.) Account of interview with a committee of Congress.

[12]Van Tyne, *American Revolution,* 280.

[13]For accounts of the activities of Galvez see memorials in Public Record Office. *(C. O.,* 5, vol. 117.) See also relation of Pollock to Congress. *(Papers of the Continental Congress,* no. 50, fol. 1 *et seq.)*

[14]Montmorin to Vergennes. *(Esp.,* 588, no. 98, new 30, fol. 248.)

[15]Gerard to Vergennes, July 16. (*E. U.,* IV, no. 23, fols. 97-102.)

also, the move aroused much speculation. Vergennes was much alarmed for fear that this invasion would cause trouble between the United States and Spain. The expedition, however, accomplished nothing and it was left to Galvez to conquer the Floridas.

Of more vital importance was the expedition of George Rogers Clark sent out in 1778, largely through the support of Virginia. He captured a number of posts in the Northwest and gave the United States a real basis on which to maintain their rights to this country. Gerard wrote that the "success of Colonel Querk in the country of the Illinois presents the Americans with a new *apas*."[16] Great interest was aroused in America and Europe alike by this attempt to get possession of the West. In Europe it was reported that a great body of Americans had driven the English out of Illinois.[17] The British still held Detroit and the Great Lakes; but the region south of it was clear and the best title to it rested with the United States.

With the success of Clark in the West, there developed a new interest in Congress for its preservation to the republic. At an interview between Gerard and a committee of Congress in December, 1778, the whole situation was again gone over. Gerard declared that he succeeded in convincing Jay and a delegate from Virginia of the wisdom of renouncing all conquests, whereupon the member from New York became angry.[18] This was the beginning

[16]Gerard wrote to Vergennes that Virginia and South Carolina cared nothing for the conquest of the Floridas. "Ces états," he continued, "aiment mieux diriger l'emploi de leur forces contre ce qu'on appelle *Backountries*. Les succes du Major Querk dans le Pays des Illinois leur presentent un nouvel apas. On croit que les Anglois sont totalement chassés des rives de l'Ohio et du Mississipi." December 19, (*E. U.*, V, no. 47, fols. 349-358.)

[17]*Arc. Nat. C.*, 13; *Colonies, Correspondance General*, nos. 14-16.

[18]Gerard to Vergennes, December 22. (*E. U.*, no. 47, fol. 349.) It is not improbable that R. H. Lee was the Virginia member of this committee, for he held views at that time very similar to those described by Gerard. See his letter to Patrick Henry, November 15, 1778. (*Letters of R. H. Lee*, I, 452.)

of a long series of bitter disputes between Gerard and some members of Congress which was to lead to the failure of all his schemes regarding the West.

Gerard soon came to the realization that there were many influential men interested in the Mississippi Valley, and he saw that the question must be handled carefully. The western interests, he wrote, were centered in three regions, the Illinois and two great projects for the settlement of the Ohio, and all these, he thought, would unite at the first suggestion of giving up any part of the West.[19] Against this party Gerard held control of the committee of foreign affairs, which was instructed to do nothing without his advice.[20]

The party opposed to Gerard increased greatly in strength, but the French minister still thought he had a majority of Congress with him. The "anti-Gallicans" declared that the right to navigate the Mississippi was indispensable to the development of the West, and maintained that there were involved the interests not only of the people of the Illinois, but those in the Southwest as well. These people formed a part of the American nation, they argued, and must not be abandoned.[21] Thus was the issue squarely drawn. Gerard had urged Miralles not to give the Americans an opportunity to formulate their demands; but in spite of his cunning they had now declared their right to the whole West. With this party the French minister at once came into conflict.

[19]"les proprietaires des Terres des Illinois et de deux etablissements immenses projettés et commencés sur l'Ohio n'epargneroient rien pour y susciter des obstacles, et ils auroient bien des moyens pour former un parti puissant." December 22. (*E. U.*, V, no. 47, fol. 349.)

[20]Gerard to Vergennes, January 28, 1779. (*Ibid.*, VII, no. 52, fols. 129-135.)

[21]"d'autres croyent que la conservation de la navigation du Mississipi est absolument indispensable. Ces. . . . . se fondent sur les intérêts de la population qui s'est établie sur l'Ohio vers la rivière des illinois dans le Pays des Natchez dans la floride occidentale, ils disent quils ne peuvent abandonner leurs compatriots qui se sont formés en corps de nation et qui demandent a étre admis à la confédération americaine." Gerard to Vergennes, January 28, 1770. (*Ibid.*)

Gerard had never before suggested to the Americans that they should give up their claims to the Mississippi Valley. To Morris he had talked only of the navigation of the Mississippi River. He wished to look after the interests of Spain, and when he found the Americans so yielding he naturally concluded that they would surrender their whole title to the West. To Congress he now declared that this territory no more belonged to the United States than to Spain if that country should wish to conquer it. The rightful boundaries of the United States, he argued, were those they had possessed as colonies, and the proclamation of 1763 and the Quebec Act had forever deprived them of the West. The pretentions of Congress, he insisted, were contrary to the spirit of the alliance with France, whose king would not prolong the war a single day in order to maintain them. Such a course, he urged, would also incur the enmity of Spain, so that when the time for peace came they would find themselves crushed between British hatred and Spanish jealousy. The honor and interests of the United States, he added, were opposed to conquest. "Already your territory is unwieldy," he insinuated, "and how much more so will it become by this enormous addition of dominion."[22]

Gerard was not prepared, however, to fight for the claims of Spain. Altho his conduct thus far had received the approval of Vergennes, the foreign minister

[22]" . . . . j'ai ajouté que les Etats-Unis n'avoient aucune sorte de droit sur les possessions du Roi d'Angleterre qui n'apartient egalement au Roi d'Espagne, quand il seroit en guerre avec l'angre. Que leur droit se bornoit au Territoire qu'ils possedoient comme Colonies Angloises." He continued that the United States had claimed to be thirteen states "et fondée [a nation] sur les moyens les plus légitimes, et que rien ne seroit plus dangereux pour leur honneur leur consideration la constance de leurs principes et la confiance dans leur bonne foi, qu'ils se sont envisages euxmêmes comme une république commerçante qui ne pourroit pas même conserver une armee permanente; qu'ils eprouent déjà combien l'étendue de leur territoire rendoit une administration utile et active difficile a etablir." Gerard to Vergennes, January 28. *(E. U.,* VII, no. 52.)

had shown no desire to support the extreme demands of Spain for possession of the West. Vergennes had never opposed the claims of the Americans to this territory, but had condemned the Spanish pretensions as "monstrous."[23] He had expressed his acceptance of all the Spanish demands, however, except their claim to control the Mississippi Valley. He had also instructed Gerard not to oppose the American demands. Under these circumstances the minister to the United States could not go to extremities, and began to conciliate. He urged that it would not be well to make of Canada a fourteenth state, but suggested that much might be expected of the generosity of the King of Spain if he were conceded Florida.

The propositions of Gerard drew more closely party lines in Congress. His friends were at first better organized and he felt that his policy would triumph. He was definitely promised the Floridas for Spain and thought he would soon win the West.[24] He believed that he had seized the critical moment, when the party of expansion was weakest, to deprive the United States of lands which they regarded "as the patrimony for their overflowing population." He was sure that the Americans must yield because of their desire for peace and their despair of making further conquests.[25]

[23]Vergennes stood for the idea of giving the Floridas to Spain and allowing Great Britain to keep Canada. See p. 98. Altho he might include in Canada much of the old Northwest still the implication would be that he conceded the West to Congress. He had spoken without complaint of the American occupation of the Ohio and Illinois regions, but had opposed the claims of Spain.

[24]Gerard reported that he had good information that the committee of foreign affairs would cede the Floridas to Spain if the Americans conquered them and would renounce all pretensions that could give offense to that crown. Gerard to Vergennes, January 29. (*E. U.*, VII, no. 533, fol. 136.)

[25]"Peutêtre l'esperance de la paix et le desespoir de faire aucune conquête rendra les Americains moins difficiles sur cet objet." Gerard to Vergennes, February 15. (*Ibid.*, no. 89, fols. 215-219.)

Altho Gerard doubtless had a strong following, the anti-Gallican party was rapidly organizing. It not only insisted upon possession of the West and the freedom of the Mississippi, but began to agitate for an extension of the northern frontier.[26] They showed also considerable hostility to Spain and Gerard had a new cause of worry. He tried to get them to suspend discussion of the northern boundary, and demanded renewed assurances that Spain should have the Floridas.

Altho checked for a time, Gerard did not give up his policy. To the members of Congress he maintained that the court of Madrid should be conciliated and its friendship sought. He disclaimed any intention to push the interests of Spain, and declared that he sought only her alliance. That nation was content with her possessions, he affirmed, but she might take a more friendly attitude towards the American cause if Congress would offer the possession of Pensacola and the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi. On the north he argued that the British held Canada so firmly that they could be dislodged only after a "most fortunate war." For this reason he urged that Congress should be willing to make peace without seeking any additions of territory. France, he said, desired nothing but the independence of the United States, and asked only that her ally should work to this end.[27]

The words of Gerard produced different effects on the different members of Congress. Most of them were willing to surrender all claims to Pensacola but the proposition to give Spain the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi aroused much angry discussion. Gerard skilfully built up his party once more to the acceptance of his views. He worked shrewdly on the jealousies of the eastern delegates to secure their aid and even made an impression on

[26]La difficulté la plus réelle et la plus fachêuse que les Americains pourroient elever seroit celle qui regarderoit les limites de leur territoire vis-a-vis de l'Angre." *(E. U.,* VII, no. 89, fols. 215-219.)

[27]Gerard to Vergennes, February 17 (*ibid.,* VII, no. 98, fol. 233); February 18 (*ibid.,* no. 100, fol. 244).

those from the south. Some of the Virginia and North Carolina members admitted their fear that the West was being rapidly settled by a lawless class which would prove dangerous to the older governments. These people would become equally hostile to the Spanish power, they agreed, and some way must be devised to restrain them. To accomplish this they were willing to hand over to the court of Madrid complete control of the navigation of the Mississippi and of the Gulf of Mexico. Some of the Gerard party, however, contended for a depot or place of deposit at the mouth of the river,[28] altho they sought first of all the alliance of Spain.

On the question of pushing the northern boundary further into Canada Gerard took a decided stand. Washington had declared the conquest of Canada impracticable; and the French minister felt he could urge the same. Accordingly he asked Congress once more to renounce all pretensions to this territory. It has not been in rebellion, he argued, and has no claim to help. This is not a war of conquest, but only to attain independence for the United States; and when this is accomplished, we are ready to make peace.[29]

Gerard soon felt that his policy was again in the open and he prepared to make the most of his opportunities. He was sure of the Floridas and felt convinced that he could get the control of the Mississippi for Spain, provided the western settlements were conceded a port on the Gulf. Spain, however, was expected to reward this concession with a large sum of money.[30]

The projects of Gerard furnished the issue for a great battle in Congress. On one side were the New Englanders who insisted on the acquisition of Nova Scotia and the

[28]Gerard to Vergennes. (*E. U.*, VII, no. 98, fol. 233; no. 100, fol. 244.)

[29]*Ibid.*

[30]Gerard to Vergennes, March 1. (*Ibid.*, VII, no. 123, fol. 244.)

fisheries necessary for their prosperity and safety.[31] On the other side was the southern and western party which gave preeminence to the question of the navigation of the Mississippi and American influence in the West. Gerard was the center of all controversy and his house became the committee room of Congress. Here came his partisans to discuss the situation and to fortify themselves with arguments. Here came the opponents of his policy to argue with him and to present the claims of their country. Among the former Gerard lists Gouveneur Morris and John Jay. His most determined foes were the Adams family and the Lees. These two families had formed a sort of alliance termed the "Junto", and they were untiring in their opposition to the measures of France. Gerard declared that the purpose of the opposition was to maintain the war until the British could send a new commission which they thought would offer liberal terms of peace.[32]

A special commission of five appointed by Congress to consider the foreign affairs of the country reported on February 23. It urged that Canada should be restricted to the boundaries contended for by Great Britain in the Seven Years War, which meant that the United States should control the Great Lakes on the north and extend westward to the Mississippi. The southern boundary it placed as the northern line of Florida. The committee also maintained the right to the free navigation of the

[31]"Les 4 Etats de la nouvelle Angre ont fortément representé la nécessité de cette stipulation." *E. U.*, VII, no. 123, fol. 244. After March 1, Gerard could not count so strongly on the help of a party, but he depended more on a sort of personal following which he was building up, particularly among the smaller states. Jenifer of Maryland was the most important of these men.

[32]The position of many members of Congress is very puzzling. Lee favored the ideas of Gerard toward the West during the fall of 1778 (see p. 119). The next spring he led the opposition. Jay was counted as a friend of the Spanish policy. His later opinions are well known. Gerard declared that Samuel Adams wished to continue the war to save his importance, and that that was the purpose of his coalition with the Lees. March 4. (*Ibid.*, VII, no. 133, fol. 328.)

Mississippi and to the fisheries of Newfoundland. It recommended the conquest of the Floridas which should be sold to Spain and also the occupation of Nova Scotia. The discussion of this report occupied many days,[33] and from the despatches of Gerard we get an idea of the bitterness aroused. The report of the committee embodies two sets of ideas; those of the East and those of the South. The party of the East looked for an extension of boundaries far into Canada, with the conquest of Nova Scotia and the freedom of the Newfoundland fisheries. The party of the South held to the possession of the Mississippi Valley with the freedom to navigate that river. Gerard opposed the efforts of both. He conferred with one of his friends in Congress, and they agreed that a simple and fair arrangement for the western boundary would be to take the line marked off by the proclamation of 1763.[34]

The plan of Gerard received no serious consideration from Congress. The debates, however, covered a wide range of matter. In them the whole history of British colonization and diplomacy was gone over. The trend of the discussion soon convinced Gerard that the claim to Nova Scotia would be abandoned, but the question of the northwest boundary was more difficult to settle. The advocates of expansion justified the claim to the Northwest Territory, not only on historical grounds but likewise on

[33]This committee represented well the different sections of the country: it included S. Adams of Massachusetts, G. Morris of New York, Witherspoon of New Jersey, Smith of Virginia, and Burke of North Carolina. In its report it urged the interests of every section and thus threw the whole question into Congress. *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XIII, 241-243.

[34]"L'un des délégués m'a montré le plan qu'il a redigé pour les [limites] fixer Quoique cette matière ne me soit pas assez connue dans ses détails pour fixer mon jugement ce plan a beaucoup soulagé l'aprehension oú j'étois que quelque grand Propriétaire du Sud ne se chargéât de ce travail. On propose de déterminer ces limites en prenant le Traitée de Paris d'une main et l'autre la Proclamation [of 1763] cette méthode m'a paru simple et facile et je n'ai pû m'empecher d'y applaudir." Gerard to Vergennes, March 3. (*E. U.*, VII, no. 67, fol. 131.)

grounds of conquest and occupation. They further contended that the surrender of this region would mean the acknowledgment of the validity of the Quebec Act, which was one of the causes of the Revolution.

The debates on the question of the boundaries and the navigation of the Mississippi continued from the 1st of March to the 19th. On the question of the Mississippi important interests in the West and South united to demand the right of navigation. Those interested in the Northwest Territory pictured the great advantages to the South of controlling the trade of this region. If our people do not get this trade, they argued, the English will get it, and thus become powerful in a region where it is to the interest of both Spain and the United States to keep them out.[35]

So powerful did the opposition to giving up the Mississippi become that Gerard felt it necessary to interfere. Through one of his partisans he learned that the western party proposed to treat directly with the British crown for the navigation of the Mississippi. Gerard protested vigorously against this scheme as vicious and dangerous in its purpose and unjust in its tendencies and declared that Congress acted as if it wished to dictate first to Spain, then to Great Britain. He remarked that Spain had no contract with the United States and was under no obligation to them, and that the Spanish king would never consent to surrender his rights over the Mississippi, and on this question the king of France would probably take his part. He observed that it seemed strange that Congress should think of treating with England to despoil Spain and that it appeared that America would soon be at war with the Spanish monarchy.[36] This interview with Gerard was skillfully used by his friends, who believed that they had a majority against the proposition. They desired, however, to win over the important state of Virginia. They

[35]Gerard to Vergennes, March 8. *(E. U.,* no. 135, fol. 339.)

[36]*Ibid.*

expected to bring the question to a vote on March 11, but in the meantime the delegates from South Carolina were recalled and some time was necessary to rebuild their majority.[37] The final vote on the question of making the right to navigate the Mississippi an ultimatum was taken on March 24. Only one state favored the motion. Two were divided and the others voted no.[38]

The debate on the boundaries was milder and there was from the beginning greater unanimity of sentiment. Several of those opposed to the policy of Gerard informed him that they would not demand conquests beyond what really belonged to the thirteen states.[39] There was considerable fear that if Canada were left to Great Britain she would prove a dangerous neighbor. Gerard reassured them with the promise of the unfaltering support of France, who would never allow them to sink back under the power of her rival. He also suggested that the whole quesiton of boundaries be left until after the peace for settlement; but this plan received no support at all in Congress.[40] The debates on the acquisition of Nova Scotia convinced the New England delegates that it would not carry, and they substituted a demand for the right of fishing on the banks of Newfoundland, which was carried by a close vote.[41]

On March 19 Congress decided on the boundaries it would demand as an ultimatum. This boundary ran irregularly to the south end of Lake Nipissing, thence to the source of the Mississippi, down the middle of that river to the thirty-first parallel, thence along the northern boundary of Florida to the Atlantic.[42] This vote was a compromise. It did not grant the demands of New England for

[37]Gerard to Vergennes, March 10, 1779. *(E. U.,* no. 143, fol. 367.)

[38]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XIII, 369.

[39]Gerard to Vergennes, March 8. *(E. U.,* VII, no. 135, new 339.)

[40]Gerard to Vergennes, March 12, 1779. (*Ibid.,* no. 144, fol. 375.)

[41]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XIII, 372; Gerard to Vergennes, March 18, 1779. *(E. U.,* VII, no. 159, fol. 407.)

[42]*Journals of Continental Congress,* (Ford ed.), XIII, 339-341.

the possession of Nova Scotia, but laid claim to the whole region of the Great Lakes. At the same time the South and West received no promise of the navigation of the Mississippi or the possession of the Floridas. In this contest the partisans of Gerard had not yet showed their full strength. They felt sure of a majority in favor of the French policy, but were confronted by the untiring opposition of Lee. Such was the changing character of Congress that no policy could well be assured; and the partisans of Gerard were waiting until the time when they could carry their measure "by such a majority that Mr. Lee would find himself the only one in opposition."[43]

The vote of Congress in March on the question of the boundaries and the Mississippi had satisfied no one. On the question of the fisheries the anti-Gallican party had been active.[44] New England was not content with the idea of having the English on its northern boundaries and renewed its proposal to conquer Canada.[45] Gerard was tireless in his opposition to this plan and urged upon Congress the futility of continuing the war for this purpose.[46] While he admitted that the treaty of alliance did not define the limits of the states whose independence was guaranteed, he still insisted that the guarantee could not be made to apply to territories not in the possession of the United States.[47]

By July Gerard had come to feel that his policy with regard to the boundaries was triumphant. He had built up a large party in and out of Congress, but he had lost his influence over the leading men. He depended on men of minor caliber, like Jenifer of Maryland, who sided with the French policy and favored limiting the boundaries of the United States as much as possible.[48]

[43]Gerard to Vergennes. (*E. U.*, VIII, no. 10.)
[44]Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 175.
[45]Gerard to Vergennes, March 14. (*E. U.*, VIII, no. 48, new 83.)
[46]*Ibid.*
[47]Gerard to Vergennes, March 21. (*Ibid.*, no. 59, new 88.)
[48]*Ibid.*, IX, no. 17, new 103.

On the 12th of July Gerard held a conference with Congress in committee of the whole, in which he reviewed the whole history of French intervention and declared that the world was convinced that the war had no object of conquest but only to secure the independence of the United States. In this conference he urged also that Congress should seek the favor of Spain by the offer of such moderate terms as would incline His Catholic Majesty to the American interests.[49]

As a result of his management Gerard believed that he held the affair of boundaries well under control. He did not flatter himself that Congress would renounce all its former pretentions, but he believed it would make no objection to the cession of the Floridas to Spain and would tacitly let go the navigation of the Mississippi. He even expressed his belief that if necessary it would willingly abandon Georgia.[50]

The partisans of Gerard had postponed the final vote on the boundaries until a time when they could hope to carry their plan by an overwhelming majority. On July 18 Gerard wrote that the committee of foreign affairs stood eight to four in favor of his measure, and that his party worked unceasingly to win over votes. One of the most active supporters of this policy was John Jay, the president of Congress. Gerard, who himself took an active part in the campaign, thought that it was time to bring the question to a vote and to pass some measures favored by the opposition in return for their support on the boundaries. He felt that the strength of the anti-Gallicans was weakened by the failure of England to offer favorable terms of peace; but if the opposition should carry the vote in Congress, he proposed to attack its validity on the ground that the Articles of Confederation provided that every state must ratify a treaty.[51]

[49] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XIV, 829-835.
[50] Gerard to Vergennes, July 20, 1779. (*E. U.*, IX, no. 46, new 109.)
[51] Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 221-222.

In the meanwhile the "Junto" opposing the policy of Gerard was very active. Its organization and workings are obscure, but it suddenly attained great power in Congress. Its strength was unknown to Gerard, who declared that the influence of Lee in Virginia was destroyed and the opposition was confined to New England.[52]

On the question of the boundaries and the treaty with Spain several plans were laid before Congress. Gerard favored a plan to outline the boundaries as vaguely as possible and to leave their final settlement until after the peace. On the question of cessions to Spain he felt there would be no difficulty.[53]

In spite of his words of assurance, however, Gerard feared the power of the "Junto." He learned from his confidants that it would ask Congress to demand as an ultimatum an extension of boundaries as far north as 46°. The opposition declared openly that the justice of the king would never refuse these conditions so essential to the safety of the United States.[54]

Early in August the battle in Congress openly began. On the 5th, M'Kean moved that, if Great Britain persisted in the war, Congress should seek to conclude treaties with both France and Spain providing for the conquest of Canada, Nova Scotia, and Bermuda. Spain and France were to be offered for their aid equal rights in the fisheries. This resolution was made in the interests of the northern states; but the southern delegation secured an amendment providing for the conquest of the Floridas and demanding the "free navigation of the Mississippi."[55]

[52]Gerard to Vergennes. (*E. U.*, IX, no. 100, new 116.)

[53]*Ibid.* The actual disposition of Congress, Gerard wrote, is "to renounce the Floridas and tacitly to give up the navigation of the Mississippi, of which the two banks belong to that crown [Spain] provided they are given a free port for exporting their goods and importing merchandise."

[54]Doniol, *Histoire,* IV, 222.

[55]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XIV, 924-926.

This resolution was an open defiance to Gerard. It repudiated all his advice and outlined a new policy of conquest. It is doubtful, however, if it was put forth seriously as a plan of action. More likely it was intended as a feeler to test the strength of the anti-Gallican party in Congress. The motion was not voted upon, but it threw open for debate the whole question of the territories and of the navigation of the Mississippi. Both sides understood that this was the last card of the game. Gerard, however, felt that he would win, for he controlled the committee of foreign affairs, and through it transmitted his arguments and threats to Congress.

In the meantime a special committee had been appointed to draw up terms of peace. It had done its work in consultation with Gerard, and on August 14 presented its report. The terms were more moderate than the demands of the anti-Gallicans. Florida and Canada were to be given up, but the northern boundary was to extend as far as Lake Nipissing.[56] Several reasons were back of this decision. News had just reached America of the alliance between France and Spain; and it was seen that the latter power would make strong demands for the Floridas.[57]

The entrance of Spain into the war was made the occasion for new propositions of a treaty of alliance. On this question the extreme anti-Gallicans maintained their fight. On September 9 they introduced a resolution providing for an alliance with Spain whereby that power was to assure to the United States the possession of Canada, Nova Scotia, Bermudas, and the Floridas, as well as the navigation of the Mississippi. This motion provided, however, that if Spain should insist upon it, the United States would cede to her the Floridas and the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi below the thirty-first parallel. The character of this resolution clearly revealed the weakness of the extreme position, and it was tabled at once to make way for a more moderate one. After several days of debate

[56] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XIV, 956-967.
[57] Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 205.

it was resolved that if Spain would accede to the treaty of alliance, Congress would make no objection to her acquiring the Floridas, provided that the "United States shall enjoy the free navigation of the river Mississippi into and from the sea."[58]

On information furnished by Gerard that England would probably soon seek peace, Congress resolved to send a representative to Europe who should be on the ground when the first advances were made. There were two leading candidates named, Jay and John Adams. Gerard and his partisans favored Jay as being more moderate in his views, while the anti-Gallicans gave their support to Adams.[59] After several days of delay the vote was taken on September 27 and Adams was elected minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty of peace with Great Britain.[60] At the same time Jay was elected minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty of alliance with Spain. On the next day instructions for Jay were decided upon, which in regard to the Floridas and the Mississippi were identical with those agreed to on the 9th.[61] On October 13 Witherspoon moved that Jay be allowed to recede from the claim of a free navigation of the Mississippi below the thirty-first parallel, if such were necessary in order to obtain the alliance with Spain, but this motion was promptly defeated.[62] The instructions to Adams were the same as those agreed upon on August 14.

The resolutions of August and September in regard to the boundaries and the Mississippi mark the formation of a definite policy by Congress. This policy was a compromise between the East and the South, between the French party and the anti-Gallicans. While Gerard was not entirely satisfied with the conditions laid down, he felt

[58] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XV, 1042-1046.
[59] Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 209.
[60] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XV, 1113.
[61] *Ibid.*, 1116.
[62] *Ibid.*, 1168.

that they were not unfavorable to France.[63] He regarded the appointment of Jay as a decided step towards "conciliation" with Spain, and as a bid for the friendship of Charles III.

The work of Gerard as minister to the United States was finished. He had long been laboring under a severe malady attributed to the climate of Philadelphia and had struggled heroically against disease while upholding the interests of France and Spain. The Chevalier de la Luzerne, his successor, had already arrived in the United States and was in close touch with him. Congress regarded his departure with regret. In spite of his interference in American politics he retained his popularity till the last. Congress had his picture painted for its council chamber and wrote Louis XVI a flattering letter describing his loyalty and ability.

The mission of Gerard was unfortunate from the standpoint of both his own country and the United States. To Vergennes he gave a one-sided picture of conditions in the United States, and led him to believe that the great body of sober-minded, intelligent citizens favored restricting the boundaries of their country, and that the opposition was made up of a few narrow and bigoted fanatics. His meddling in the politics of Congress and his formation of a faction around himself led to serious results. It made the opponents of the French policy more determined and aggressive and aroused, in the minds of many, suspicion of the honesty and friendship of the French monarchy. This interference of Gerard alienated the ablest men in Congress, men like Jay and Morris, who had honestly favored the policy he advocated. As a result of his course of action the diplomacy of the United States was entrusted to his enemies and thus to men who looked with distrust on any policy advocated by Frenchmen. John Adams was elected minister plenipotentiary by an anti-French party and against the will of Gerard. Jay had

[63]Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 211.

long been associated with the French policy, but his change of heart was probably known to his colleagues before his election as minister to Spain. Gerard had carried out his policy without direction and without consultation with the French foreign office. After his first instructions, which directed him to look after the interests of Spain and to restrain Congress from all attempts at conquest, he acted nearly always on his own initiative. The result was a lack of harmony between the representations of Gerard in Philadelphia and the promise of Vergennes at Paris. The course of Gerard received the approval of Vergennes and considerably modified the general policy of the French court; and upon his reports were based the instructions to his successor Luzerne. Thus arose a serious divergence between the views of Congress and those of Vergennes, which was in turn to lead to mutual jealousies and suspicions; and to the conduct of Gerard is due in a large measure the irritation which later broke out between the French minister of foreign affairs and the envoys of the United States.

# CHAPTER VII

## VERGENNES AND THE ALLIES OF FRANCE.

The alliance between France and Spain did not win a friend for the United States. While it added another to the list of those fighting the British Empire, it divided the councils of her enemies; for the ambitions of Spain were unalterably opposed to the interests and aims of the United States. Florida Blanca had long feared the growth of a powerful rival in the New World, and he had urged that Great Britain be allowed to keep Canada as a check on the power of the new republic. Altho it was not stipulated in the convention, it was tacitly understood between France and Spain that no further effort would be made to conquer the British possessions north of the thirteen states.[1] Spain had made exorbitant demands for territories which the United States also claimed. To her possession of the Floridas there was no objection; but her demand for the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi aroused much opposition, and her claim to territory east of that river did not receive the slightest support in Congress.

Back of Spain's purpose to keep the United States a weak and dependent nation was the desire to build up a powerful empire around the Gulf of Mexico. Cuba, Mexica, and Louisiana formed three quadrants of this circle, and the possession of Eastern Louisiana and the Floridas would complete it. If, on the other hand, the vast regions to the east of the Mississippi should become peopled by a

[1]Florida Blanca wrote to Montmorin, April 2, 1779: "dans la cas où la paix se feroit il convient de ne pas chasser les Anglois du Canada, cependant dans le cas contraire il seroit à mon avis, nécessaire de porter les vues des Americains de ce coté là ce qui serviroit a leur donner un objet d'occupations à prévenir leurs discorde intestines . . ." *Esp.*, 593, no. 77, new 180. Vergennes wrote to Florida Blanca, March 18, that while the Americans were anxious for Canada he would seek to induce them to give up such an undertaking. *Ibid.*, no. 33, new 81.

powerful and alien race, Spain would confront a new danger when frontiersmen, seeking an outlet to the sea, should come down and overwhelm her dominions. To avert this already apparent danger, the United States must be kept to the Atlantic seaboard, and her possessions hemmed in by Great Britain. The power and ambitions of the British Empire were known; but the formation of this strange republic on the outskirts of civilization filled the ministers of Charles III with strange and tempestuous terror.

Hardly had the ink dried on the signatures of the convention uniting France and Spain in the war when Florida Blanca proposed fresh restrictions on the growth of the United States. He suggested that Great Britain be left in possession of all posts in America which she was able to hold at the time of the ratification of the treaty of peace. This would mean that New York, Long Island, the greater part of Connecticut, and Rhode Island, including the city of Newport, most of Georgia and a part of Virginia should probably be left to the British Empire.[2]

It is to Vergennes's credit that he gave an absolute refusal to Spain's proposition. He declared that such a course would make it appear as if France had abandoned her allies, and would provoke their suspicion and enmity. It would be an open violation of the treaty of alliance, and as such would bring dishonor on the crown of France.[3] This decided stand on the part of the French ministry put an early end to the plan of a settlement of American affairs

[2]Florida Blanca argued that the Americans needed peace so badly that they must accept any conditions. He maintained that by this arrangement the United States would always be menaced by Great Britain and consequently would become more attached to France. Montmorin to Vergennes, April 26, 1779. *(Esp.,* 593, no. 137, new 320.)

[3]Montmorin pleaded against the schemes of the Spanish minister that France had engagements with the Americans which bound her to a different policy. He declared that Congress would never consent to any such arrangement. *(Ibid.)* Vergennes also opposed the idea. May, 1779. *(Ibid.,* 593, no. 147, new 320; *ibid.,* 593, no. 157, new 343; *ibid.,* 594, new 192.)

on the basis of *uti possidetis* and assured to the United States a geographical unity.

The Floridas, however, were subject to conquest, and to this point the Spanish arms were at once directed. Spain was anxious to have the help of the United States in this undertaking, and altho she would give no recognition to them, Florida Blanca asked Vergennes to have them send an expedition into Florida from the north while Spanish troops attacked it from the Mississippi.[4] Vergennes promised to do what he could, and instructed Luzerne to propose the matter to Congress.[5] The mind of the Spanish minister however, soon took another turn; he gave up the idea of cooperation with the American troops, and in June sent orders to Galvez to attack the British possessions in America, and ordered other Spanish governors to help him.[6]

While Spain was definitely planning the conquest of the Floridas, Vergennes was worrying about the attitude of Congress on the question of boundaries. He could learn nothing from Franklin, but he feared the demands of the republic would be excessive. He was determined, however, in the negotiations for peace, to insist on no more than the integrity of the thirteen states.[7]

The attitude of Spain was also a source of uneasiness. Montmorin had intimated that negotiations between that

[4]Il seroit bon cependant que les Colons cherchassent à entrer dans la Floride où de notre côté nous ferons une forte diversion par le Mississippi." Florida Blanca to Vergennes. (*Ibid.*, 594, no. 36, new 80.)

[5]May and June, 1779. (*Ibid.*, 594, no. 40, new 263; no. 41, new 267.) To Florida Blanca. (*Ibid.*, 594, no. 68, new 171; no. 73, new 180.)

[6]It appears that Florida Blanca became suspicious of Congress. He lost interest in St. Augustine and proposed to leave it to the Americans. Montmorin to Vergennes, May 11. (*Ibid.*, 594, no. 40, new 76; *ibid.*, no. 120, fol. 288.) For orders to other governors see Don Juan Baptiste Bonet, governor of San Domingo, to Gonzales de Castegon. (*C. O.* 5, 131, fol. 7: letter book of intercepted correspondence.)

[7]Vergennes to Bretuel, June 29. (*Esp.*, 594, no. 151, fol. 350.)

country and the United States must be handled carefully.[8] Vergennes knew that Spain had no regard for the interests of the United States, and from her projects on the Mississippi he felt that his two allies were in danger of clashing.[9]

In spite of the importunities of Vergennes,[10] Florida Blanca was slow to formulate his demands. He had realized that he could not obtain a settlement on the basis of *uti possidetis*, but he hoped that Great Britain could keep Canada and East Florida. West Florida with Pensacola and Mobile he was determined to have for Spain in order to exclude all foreigners from the Gulf of Mexico. To this end also he insisted upon the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi River, and intimated that this was a point he would not yield. All Spanish America, he maintained, must be closed to British and Americans alike.[11]

Vergennes was soon relieved of his anxiety on this score by the report from America that Congress would probably surrender its claims on Canada and the Floridas, as well as the right to navigate the Mississippi River. At the same time he was informed of the strong feeling among the eastern delegates and their proposal to treat directly with Great Britain for the navigation of the Mississippi. In the light of this information Vergennes prepared the instructions to Luzerne, Gerard's successor, and it is evident that he wrote in a spirit of hostility to the United States. He believed that there was a strong English party in America, and if such could exist at this time he argued that no dependence could be placed on the permanent friendship of the republic.[12]

[8]He asked that the United States send an envoy of a character supple and conciliatory; one with firmness combined with sweetness and patience. Montmorin to Vergennes, June 3. (*Esp.*, 594, no. 85.)

[9]Vergennes, "Instructions to Luzerne," July 18. (*E. U.*, IX, no. 41, new 1.)

[10]Vergennes asked often for the views of Spain. He declared his unwillingness to cross her policy unless it were absolutely necessary. *Esp.*, 594, no. 201.

[11]Montmorin to Vergennes, July 31. (*Ibid.*, 594, no. 220, new 491.)

[12]Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 97.

With this view of the attitude of the United States, Vergennes opposed their position on every point of dispute, the western boundaries, the navigation of the Mississippi, and the Floridas. Just what was the western boundary he did not attempt to decide; but he feared the danger of a dispute between the United States and Spain over the lands from which the English might be driven. He accordingly urged Luzerne to get Congress to fix a definite boundary to their claims on the West, and especially did he fear the aggressions of the southern states.[13]

On the question of the navigation of the Mississippi, Vergennes was still more unfriendly to the claims of the United States. He had before this expressed himself favorably to the American demand; but now he declared that it was shown to his satisfaction that the Americans had no right to it. Before the Revolution, he said, the boundaries of the United Provinces in no place extended to the Mississippi; and it was absurd to claim the rights of Great Britain, whose authority they had abjured.[14] He instructed Luzerne to demand from Congress the renunciation of all pretentions to the right to navigate the river, and the promise to limit themselves to soliciting the favor of the king of Spain.

[13]Vergennes wrote that it was the greatest interest of Congress to fix "d'une maniere claire, précise, et invariable les limites et les pretentions des Etats-Unis dans cette partie [the West] et surtout en prennent les precautions les plus efficaces pour prevoir les empietemens et pour empêcher les Provinces du Sud de se laisser aller à l'esprit de conquête." "Instructions to Luzerne," July 18, 1779. (*E. U.*, IX, no. 41, new 1.)

[14]"A l'égard de la navigation sur le Mississipi, il est a peu près demontré que les Américains n'y ont aucun droit puisqu'au moment de la revolution les limites des 13 Etats-Unis ne s'etendoient point jusqu'au Fleuve et qu'il Seroit abuser de leur part de reclamer les droits de l'Angre, c'est à dire d'une Puissance dont ils ont abjuré la domination. Il convient donc que le Congrès s'explique categoriquement sur cette matière en declarant que les Etats-unis ne forment aucune pretention a la Navigation du Mississipi et en se bornant à solliciter de la bonne volonté du Roi d'Espagne les faveurs que son intérêt lui permettra d'accorder aux Americains." *Ibid.*

To the Floridas also Vergennes declared that the United States had no right. As a peaceful British colony they were still open to the conquest of Spain. They were of no value to the United States, whereas Spain had a double reason for their conquest. In the first place they had formerly been a part of the Spanish empire, and in the second they were essential to the commercial interests of Spain and to her control of the Gulf of Mexico.[15]

Three separate kinds of considerations dictated these instructions: dislike of the anti-Gallican party in Congress, and a fear that it would lead the country into a policy unfavorable to France; a desire to win better support from Spain; and lastly a belief that many Americans favored these terms. Just how strong each of these considerations was it is impossible to say. For the first and third he had ample reason in the reports of Gerard; but he seemed never to have had much at heart the ambitions of the court of Madrid.

The Spanish government had given orders for the conquest of the Floridas and had authorized Don Juan de Miralles to plan in concert with the Americans a joint attack on these provinces. Before deciding on any further military operations, however, it was necessary to wait for news from D'Estaing, who had been instructed to make a naval demonstration in support of the Spanish attack.[16] In spite of these measures Spain still showed no disposition to aid the cause of the independence of the United States. She was willing to grant them subsidies, but these were to be used only in an expedition against the Floridas. As month after month passed with no news of the success of its projects the anxiety and ambition of the Spanish court increased. The king felt that the conquest of Pensacola was the object in America nearest his heart and

[15]La Floride ne rendra les Etats-unis ni plus riches ni plus puissans et sa position geographique n'augmentera point leur surete exterieure." *E. U.*, IX, no. 41, new 1.

[16]Montmorin to Vergennes, September 27, 1779. (*Esp.*, 595, no. 165, fol. 438.)

urged that every effort be put forth to effect it.[17] Plans were hurriedly rushed through to send reinforcements from Havana and the Americans were to be urged more vigorously to aid the expedition.[18] So fearful did Florida Blanca become of the fate of the Spanish forces that he finally entreated France to send assistance[19] and promised that if Vergennes would furnish troops and ships for the attack he would pay all their expenses.[20] To this proposal Vergennes at once agreed and declared that the French would be ready at any time with their contingent.[21] He thought, however, that it would not be advisable to speak of this project to the Americans for fear of offending them. At the end of December news came of the success of Galvez on the Mississippi and his proposed attack on Mobile and Pensacola;[22] and Florida Blanca at once began to hedge on the project of accepting French aid in the conquest of Florida. He felt that if victory could be assured by the efforts of the Spanish troops alone, it would be folly to pay for French assistance. To Montmorin he intimated that Spain did not wish to attack Pensacola, and that she would not subsidize the French troops prepared for the expedition,[23] but suggested that the united forces make a descent on England.

News of this change of plan aroused much indignation in the mind of Vergennes, who declared that the surest and quickest way to finish the war was to push it in Amer-

[17]Montmorin to Vergennes, November 8, 1779. (*Esp.*, 596, no. 76, fol. 179.)

[18]*Ibid.*, 596, no. 8, new 21; *ibid.*, 596, no. 95, fol. 224.

[19]Montmorin to Vergennes, November 22. (*Ibid.*, 596, no. 108.)

[20]Montmorin to Vergennes, December 13. (*Ibid.*, 596, no. 167.)

[21]Vergennes to Montmorin, December 17. (*Ibid.*, 596, no. 183, fol. 407.)

[22]Montmorin to Vergennes, December 13, 1779. (*Ibid.*, 596, no. 215, fol. 468.)

[23]Florida Blanca to Aranda, January 9, 1780, enclosed with Montmorin's despatches of same date. (*Ibid.*, 597, no. 1, new 22, fol. 51.)

ica.[24] He felt sure that Florida Blanca was unreliable in his promises and would present all sorts of excuses for not keeping them,[25] and henceforth there was little sympathy manifested between the two courts, and the efforts of France became directed almost entirely to the preservation of the independence of the thirteen states.

At the beginning of 1780, Jay and Adams arrived in Europe with instructions on the views of Congress relative to the boundaries and the navigation of the Mississippi. Jay had been friendly to the plans of Gerard and was regarded very favorably by that minister, who believed he would consent to the Spanish pretensions, but Jay had become suspicious of French policy before he left America and he had imbibed a still deeper distrust of the ambitions of Spain. With him to think was to act; and he had thought deeply on the claims and pretensions of the Spanish monarchy to the Floridas and the Mississippi Valley.[26] He had come, however, to secure the alliance of Spain and the recognition of the rights of the United States; and no sooner did he land than he began preparations to carry out his instructions. On his arrival at Cadiz he sent his secretary, William Carmichael, ahead to Madrid to sound the Spanish minister on his intentions towards the United States, with instructions to do justice to the interests of

[24]"Je serois bien faché que M. Le C. de floride blanche renoncât a son enterprize sur Pensacola: je puis me tromper mais je pense qu'en poussant vigoureusement la guerre en amerique nous arriverons plus surement et plus promtement a la paix que par toute autre route." Vergennes to Montmorin, January 13, 1780. *(Esp.,* 597, no. 35, fol. 106.)

[25]Same to same, January 29. (*Ibid.,* 597, no. 77, fol. 219.)

[26]Gerard to Vergennes, September 9, 1778. Jay wrote that ". . . . . both Mr. Gerard and Mr. Miralles . . . . had shown me every mark of civility and attention, though I have reason to think both of them held higher opinions of my docility than were well founded." "When Spain afterwards declared war for objects that did not include ours, and in a manner not very civil to our independence I became convinced that we ought not cede to her any of our rights, and of course that we should retain and insist upon our right to the navigation of the Mississippi." *Ibid.* Jay, "On Navigation of the Mississippi," *Correspondence and Public Papers,* I, 328-331.

Virginia and the western countries near the Mississippi, and to represent to the Spanish court that it would be ages before these extensive regions would be settled. He also asked him to find out the intention of Spain in regard to the Floridas and the country along the Mississippi.[27] From these instructions it is clear that Jay thoroughly understood the ambitions and intentions of Spain. His information had come to him, when as the friend and comrade of Gerard and Miralles, he had spent long evenings talking over an alliance with Spain and the concessions her king would exact as the price of his help.[28] He knew also that the conditions he had to offer were not such as Spain would wish and that she would likely refuse to acknowledge the independence of the United States unless her terms were acceded to, but to her demands he had resolved not to agree.

Jay did not know that Spain was the dictator in her alliance with France,[29] and he had no idea that Vergennes was exerting all his power to bring about an understanding between his allies, and that it was Spain who wished to restrict the power of the United States, and who was to prove herself a thorn in the flesh to all efforts to secure the territorial integrity of his country. Franklin had long been silent on the question of the West. Vergennes had not chosen to enter into negotiations with him on the subject, and Congress had sent him no instructions in regard to it; but Franklin, ever awake, had perceived the drift of Spanish policy, and its hostility to his country; and he understood full well that there was no sentiment in the Spanish ministry favorable to an alliance with the United

[27] Jay, *Correspondence and Public Papers*, I, 266-268.

[28] *Ibid.*, 327.

[29] *Ibid.*, 266.

States.[30] Franklin knew too, that Congress had at last decided on a policy and he was ready to work loyally with Jay in carrying it out. Henceforth the representation of the United States in Europe was vigorous and aggressive, while Vergennes was compelled to play the role of peacemaker between his allies.

Florida Blanca proved to be more hospitable than Jay had hoped. He wrote a friendly note to Jay, inviting him to court, but at the same time informing him that he could not be received as the minister of an unacknowledged power.[31] Carmichael, in company with Gerard, was received kindly by the French ambassador, who furnished him much information about the disposition of the Spanish king.[32] He learned that several months before Miralles had been instructed to enter into engagements with Congress to conquer Florida, and he regarded this as significant for the prospects of a treaty of alliance.

The politeness of Florida Blanca did not convince Jay of the good intentions of Spain. He felt sure that the message of the Spanish minister meant that independence would be acknowledged only if the United States acceded to his terms. Back of the Spanish king he thought he perceived the power and influence of France.[33] Jay, however, returned a polite answer to Florida Blanca's note[34] and

[30]"But I own, too, that my expectations of great aids from that nation are not much stronger than yours. As yet they know us too little, and are jealous of us too much; their long delay in entering into a treaty with us . . . . is to me a mark of their not being over fond of a connection with us." Franklin to Carmichael, January 27, 1780. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 476.)

[31]Florida Blanca to Jay, February 24, 1780. (*Ibid.*, III, 515.)

[32]Carmichael to Jay, February 15, 1780. (*Ibid.*, III, 496-7.)

[33]"There are many reasons which induce me to suspect that France is determined to manage between us so as to make us debtors to their influence and good correspondence with Spain for every concession on her part, and to make Spain hold herself obligated to their influence and good correspondence with us for every concession on our part." Jay to Congress, March 3, 1780. (*Ibid.*, III, 530.)

[34]Jay, *Correspondence and Public Papers*, I, 276.

the two soon entered into a discussion of the resources of the United States with the apparent purpose of forming an alliance.[35] It was not until May 11 that they held a discussion on the main points of difference between the two nations. In this conversation Florida Blanca plainly intimated that the great obstacle to the alliance was the claim of the United States to the right to navigate the Mississippi River. He urged also that they settle the question of the boundaries and expressed a desire to obtain such concessions that the English would be entirely excluded from the Gulf of Mexico. Jay reminded Florida Blanca that many of the states had for their western boundary the Mississippi and were interested in its navigation; but he expressed the opinion that they would be willing to adopt any reasonable precaution against the carrying of contraband. The Spanish minister courteously expressed his desire for an amicable adjustment and the interview closed. Jay reported to Congress that if it remained firm there would be little doubt of the outcome.[36]

Equally anxious with Jay for an understanding between Spain and the United States was Vergennes; but far better than Jay, he understood the aims of Spanish diplomacy. He knew its dislike of the new republic, and its fear that the example of a successful rebellion would have a dangerous effect on the extended colonies of Spanish America; and finally he understood from long experience its utter selfishness and greed.[37] At the same time he felt that, in order to hold Spain to the war, he must further all her projects as agreed to in the convention, and in accord-

[35]Florida Blanca wrote to Jay, March 9, desiring, before entering into a discussion on terms of alliance, to know the civil and military condition of the United States. (Jay, *Correspondence and Public Papers*, I, 277.) Jay replied in a lengthy memorial on April 25. *(Ibid.)*

[36]Jay, "Notes on Conference with Florida Blanca taken immediately after the conversation." (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, III, *722 et seq.*)

[37]Vergennes to Montmorin, March 13, 1780. *(Esp.*, 598, no. 37, new 106.) Vergennes frequently expressed his opinion of Spanish policy as selfish and unreasonable, with no regard for the rights of other nations.

ance with this policy he proposed attacks on Florida,[38] Jamaica, Gibraltar and other English possessions.[39] In fact the French ministry displayed more zeal and energy in these undertakings than did the Spanish court. Of all the campaigns inaugurated by Florida Blanca only that of Galvez in Louisiana was carried out with vigor, and he was unsupported by the other Spanish governors.[40] While Spaniards were congratulating themselves on their victories on the Mississippi, their French allies were urging them to perfect their control of the Gulf of Mexico, by an attack on Mobile and Pensacola, and even to attempt the conquest of Jamaica.

In March Montmorin reported to Vergennes his suspicions that Spain had begun through the Count of Lisbon negotiations for peace with England. These negotiations were a source of much uneasiness to the French ministry; and it was felt necessary to take part in them so as to assure the principal object of the war, the independence of the United States.[41] Montmorin at once began representations to Florida Blanca of the danger of allowing the United States to return to the dominion of England, to which the latter replied that he would provide a source of constant quarrels and divisions between the two.[42] Vergennes saw at once that if these negotiations were allowed to continue the interests of the United States would be sacrificed and France humiliated. So serious was the situation that Louis XVI wrote directly to Charles III urging that the two powers should continue to act together.[43] To this the response was favorable and Charles declared that he would never "compromise either the dignity of his crown or its sacred engagements."[44] Florida Blanca gave

[38]Vergennes to Montmorin, March 13. (*Esp.*, no. 38, new 108.)
[39]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 13. (*Ibid.*, fol. 181.)
[40]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 13. (*Ibid.*, 599, no. 41, new 76.)
[41]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 13. (*Ibid.*, 598, no. 42, new 125.)
[42]Montmorin to Vergennes, April 14. (*Ibid.*, no. 160, new 413.)
[43]Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 551-554.
[44]*Ibid.*, 456, note.

some rather lame excuses for the presence of a British agent in Spain and the affair was allowed to drop.

This incident convinced Vergennes that it was necessary to give Spain additional concessions if she were to maintain an interest in the war. In order to allay Spanish suspicions, he prepared a memorial on the benefits of an alliance with the United States in which he maintained that there was no danger to the possessions of the Spanish monarchy so long as the United States were dependent upon the two crowns for protection and that this dependence would exist as long as England held Canada and Ohio.[45] Thus it appeared that Vergennes would not insist on the American claims to the Northwest. Montmorin informed him that the great obstacle to an agreement between the United States and Spain was the navigation of the Mississippi,[46] and on this account negotiations were proceeding slowly and likely to continue to do so. He expressed to Vergennes the belief that it would be well to inform Spain of the terms of alliance between France and the United States, to which the latter replied that the best explanation of the relations between the two countries was the text of the treaty of alliance. "Independence," he wrote, "is the first of all; it is the basis of our common treaty and ought to be for the negotiations of peace. The guarantee of the domains of the United States is contingent, their extent will be determined only by a future pacification."[47] He was still determined, however,

[45]Vergennes wrote to Montmorin, April 26, 1780: "Si les premiers [the United States] doivent à l'influence et à la protection des deux couronnes leur independance et que les autres [the British] conservent ce dont il nest que . . . possible de les priver la nouvelle Ecosse, le Canada, et L'Ohio, dans Cette position les Americains auront toujours besoin des deux couronnes pour contenir et en imposer a un voisin qui sans entreprendre sur leur liberté deverrue constitutionelles ne cessera d'empieter sur leur territorie. (*Esp.*, 399, no. 35, new 8.)

[46]*Ibid.*, 599, no. 51, new 119; *ibid.*, 599, no. 60, new 85.

[47]Vergennes to Montmorin, June 12, 1780. (*Ibid.*, 599, no. 44, fol. 282.)

to drive the English out of all territory which was an integral part of the thirteen states.[48] Vergennes himself appeared to be confused as to just what were the claims and rights of the United States.

In June, 1780, news reached Spain of the capture of Mobile by the army of Galvez. The court and nation gave way to the liveliest expressions of joy,[49] and the feeling arose that the Spanish army could defeat the English without any foreign assistance. The effect was disastrous to the work of Jay, who found Florida Blanca henceforth more arrogant and exacting, and more unfavorable to the claims of Congress.[50] After his conference with Florida Blanca in May, Jay was unable to get any further propositions from him on the subject of a treaty. He always avoided any mention of giving aid to the American cause and to the notes of Jay on the subject he had returned no reply. Bills kept coming in for Jay to pay, and finally in desperation he went to Montmorin for help. The French minister promised to do what he could; and early in September Florida Blanca sent his secretary Gardoqui to reopen negotiations with the American commissioner.

The conferences with Gardoqui began on September 3, and the first question that came up was the payment of bills drawn on Jay. Gardoqui remarked that if the United States expected any help from Spain they must be prepared to offer some consideration in return. He hinted that, among other things, the renunciation of the right to navigate the Mississippi would be most acceptable to his court.[51] To this suggestion Jay replied that the Mississippi could not come in question as a consideration for a hundred thousand pounds. He declared, furthermore, that the American nation regarded this river as the natural outlet to the vast and fertile regions of the West, and that without it the settlers beyond the Alleghanies could never

[48]Vergennes to Montmorin, (*Esp.*, 599, no. 120.)
[49]*Ibid.*, 599, no. 65, 66; *ibid.*, no. 194.
[50]Jay, *Correspondence and Public Papers*, I, 386.
[51]Jay to Congress. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 64.)

hope to get their products to the sea. To these arguments Gardoqui observed that the Americans would not need this navigation during their generation and that future generations could care for themselves.

Jay was much discouraged at the progress of his negotiations in Spain and wrote in a despairing tone to Franklin.[52] He felt that little help could be expected from Spain, altho he was again convinced of the friendship of France.[53] Franklin, however, was more optimistic and urged Jay to continue his efforts. He agreed with him, however, that the United States should never give up the right to the free navigation of the Mississippi.[54]

On the evening of the 23rd Jay was admitted to a conference with Florida Blanca on the points at issue between the two countries. During the conversation Jay once more brought up the question of an alliance; but Florida Blanca replied that there was no occasion to hurry, and Jay would have time to obtain instructions from Congress on the articles to be proposed. He then brought up the question of the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi and its importance to Spain, which nation, he declared, would hold to her rights. He observed that "unless the Spaniards could exclude all nations from the Gulf of Mexico, they might as well admit all," that it was one of the principal objects of the war and of greater importance even than Gibraltar. If they could obtain this, he said, it would be a matter of indifference whether or not Spain obtained any

[52] Jay, *Correspondence and Public Papers*, I, 395.

[53] "When I consider on the one hand that France was our first, and is still our best and almost only friend, that she became an ally on terms of equality, neither taking nor attempting to take ungenerous advantage of our situation, . . . gratitude and generosity forbid me to solicit a further tax on her generosity." Jay to Congress, September 22, 1780. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 65.)

[54] "Poor as we are yet, I know we shall be rich. I would rather agree with them to buy at a great price the whole of this right on the Mississippi than sell a drop of its waters. A neighbor might as well ask me to sell my street door." Franklin to Jay, October 2, 1780. (*Ibid.*, IV, 75.)

other cession.[55] This interview convinced Jay that there was no hope of an immediate treaty with Spain, and he turned his attention to other matters.

Altho Spain had given the fullest assurance of loyalty to France, she continued her negotiations with England. France was aware of her actions, but was in no position to interfere. The war in America had produced no brilliant victories; the treasury was depleted;[56] and the king, grown despondent, was anxious for peace. The fears of Louis were further increased by the constant demands of the Spanish court for a general pacification. Vergennes also was anxious for peace, but he had resolved to obtain it only on terms honorable to his king and in accordance with his promises to the United States.[57] What disturbed him most was the Spanish insistence upon the *uti possidetis* in America, which would leave England in possession of New York and the two most southern states.[58] He urged Montmorin to sound Florida Blanca again to see if he would consent to the recognition of the United States with all their possessions, for he held that this was the only honorable course for all concerned.

Florida Blanca continued his negotiations with Great Britain, on the basis of the cession of Gibraltar to Spain and of leaving that country in possession of all other territory then held by her arms.[59] This would have given Spain

[55]Jay to Congress, November 6. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 146.)

[56]Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 487.

[57]*Ibid.*, 488; Vergennes to the king, September 27, 1780. (*Archives Nationales*, 164, no. 3.)

[58]Vergennes to Montmorin, September 27. (*Esp.*, 601, no. 17, new 38.)

[59]Vergennes wrote to Montmorin that "Either the outcome of the war will be most happy for England or that power will suffer great misfortunes; in the first case Spain will redouble her efforts to make peace with least disadvantage to herself and probably with greatest disadvantages to us; in the second case the court of London will make the most liberal and most appropriate offers to seduce Spain; she will show herself disposed to cede Gibraltar, Pensacola, and Mobile, and perhaps a part of the fisheries of Newfoundland, providing the Americans should be abandoned and France forced to break her agreement with them." September 27, 1780. (*Esp.*, 601, no. 155.)

possession of all she wished in Florida and have left the United States at the mercy of their neighbors; but it was a policy to which Vergennes would not agree. Florida Blanca had asserted that the United States were still attached to England and would prove ungrateful allies to France;[60] but his arguments did not appeal to the French minister, who reasoned that with England in possession of Canada, there could be nothing but perpetual hostility between the two nations.[61]

It was apparent that Spain would continue her efforts to make peace on the basis of *uti possidetis,* and the French court feared that it might have to accede to these terms. In order, however, to obtain for the United States as much of their territory as possible, Montmorin proposed to transfer the seat of war to America, and endeavor to drive the British out of New York and their position in the south.[62] This proposition received serious consideration from Vergennes, who saw that the Spaniards were trying to confine the United States to the interior, and to leave England in possession of all their seaports,[63] an outcome which he was resolved to prevent. Spain had no sympathy for England, but she disliked revolting colonies and she wished to make this rebellion a terrible example to her own possessions. No other motive could have led her to demand such hard conditions as the price of recognition of the United States, and to demand such conditions against the wishes of her old time friend and ally, France.

Vergennes was now firmly convinced that the only aim of Spain was to get all she could out of the war even at the sacrifice of the interests of the United States and

[60]Montmorin to Vergennes, November 20. (*Esp.,* 115, no. 142.)

[61]Vergennes to Montmorin, December 8. (*Ibid.,* 90, no. 172.)

[62]Montmorin to Vergennes, October 30, December 20, 1780. (*Ibid.,* no. 100; *ibid.,* no. 101; *ibid.,* no. 219.)

[63]Vergennes to Montmorin, November 20. (*Ibid.,* no. 155, fol. 385.)

the honor of France.[64] As late as March, 1781, Florida Blanca had shown his objections to recognizing the independence of the United States. He suggested, however, that it would be a great concession if their independence could be assured with such territory as they then held, while the British should be left in possession of all that was occupied by their troops.[65] He intimated also that Spain desired to control the navigation of the Mississippi and to obtain the ancient province of Eastern Louisiana[66] in addition to the Floridas. On these questions Vergennes took no stand, for he felt that they could be settled at the time of the peace negotiations between the two interested powers.[67] At the same time he declared that the United States must be recognized as an independent nation with all the territories that were a rightful part of their dominions.

France was anxious for peace and was ready to make many concessions to obtain it. The national treasury was empty and there were constant demands upon it, not only to supply French needs but also those of her allies. The war had, on the whole, been unsuccessful, and reports of victory were infrequent. Before seeking peace, however, Vergennes resolved to make one more attempt to drive the English entirely out of the United States and thus secure for them territorial unity and a real independence. If this attempt should succeed, France could then enforce an honorable peace; "if we fail," he wrote, "we ought not, at least, to be blamed for having neglected anything in our power

[64]"Never lose sight of the fact that Spain is devoted to her own interests before all else and that she will subordinate to them all other conditions of peace, that she will interest herself very little in the Americans, whose independence she would see with grief." Vergennes to Montmorin, January 22, 1781. (*Esp.*, 602, no. 47.)

[65]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 11, 1781. (*Ibid.*, no. 16, fol. 303.)

[66]Marbois to Montmorin, October 17, 1780. (*Ibid.*, 601, no. 63, fol. 135.)

[67]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 12, 1781 (*ibid.*, 602, no. 18, fol. 310.) Vergennes to Montmorin, April 12, 1781 (*Ibid.*, 603, no. 25, fol. 57.)

to procure it."[68] The efforts of the French forces were to be directed equally in the interests of Spain and of the United States. De Grasse was sent with a powerful fleet to America,[69] and large sums of money were given to Washington with which to equip new troops.[70] At the same time preparations were made for a new expedition against Pensacola.[71] Soon after this Vergennes wrote to Luzerne that the king was in accord with the policy of Congress to uphold the territorial rights of the union, but warned him that the fortunes of war were such that some sacrifices might be necessary for peace.[72] The tone of this message displayed a spirit of fairness and cordiality towards the United States, in striking contrast to the arrogant demands of Spain.

During the past year Spain and France had drifted farther apart, having moved along different lines of action. Spain wished to abandon the United States in return for concessions from England; France insisted that independence should be the first condition of peace and that other advantages should be sought only after this was recognized. This was a policy France had consistently maintained; and in the face of military reverses and an impoverished treasury and in opposition to the entreaties and threats of her Spanish ally, she remained the loyal and unfaltering friend of the nation she had called into life.

[68]Doniol, *Histoire,* IV, 544.
[69]*Esp.,* 602, no. 137.
[70]Doniol, *Histoire,* IV, 587.
[71]*Esp.,* 603, no. 80.
[72]*E. U.,* XVII, no. 155, new 19.

# CHAPTER VIII

## LUZERNE AND THE PRETENSIONS OF SPAIN.

The independence of the United States was with Vergennes the prime object of the war, and continued throughout the first aim of his policy. To him this meant the independence of the thirteen states with all the territories belonging to them. The extent of their dominions he did not know, and his idea of it varied from time to time. He did not, however, consider at any time either Canada or the Floridas as a part of the republic, for these provinces had never joined in the rebellion, and throughout the war remained peaceful subjects of Great Britain. If they still were a part of the British Empire it followed naturally enough that they were legitimate subjects of conquest for any nation at war with the mother country. Canada the French minister had resolved to leave to the British crown; but Spain looked with greedy eyes upon the Floridas, and he saw no reason why she should not have these provinces.

There yet remained the question of the West; the control of the Mississippi Valley and of the river that bears its name. Vergennes had been slow to express his opinion on the subject, for he had no knowledge of the merits of the dispute, and was compelled to depend on the reports of his agents and the representations of Florida Blanca. From the former he learned of the conflicting opinions in Congress and of the large number of men there who were willing to surrender all claims to the West; from the latter he heard only assertions of Spain's right to this domain and demands that it be acknowledged.[1]

Political considerations also doubtless influenced Vergennes. He was anxious to hold Spain to the war and felt it necessary to make many concessions to keep her in good humor, and, on the other hand, he identified the party in

[1]See Vergennes's instructions to Luzerne, July 18, 1779, pp. 133, 134.

Congress opposed to Spanish pretensions with the anti-Gallican party. Under the influence of these impressions, he drew up instructions for Luzerne in July, 1779. It was here that he first took a definite stand on the great questions at issue, and his decision was against the United States. On the navigation of the Mississippi he upheld the contentions of Spain and he gave no encouragement to the hopes of the Americans to extend their authority over the West. It is possible that he did not understand the full extent of Spanish claims in the Mississippi Valley, but when those claims were defined, France had already committed herself to the Spanish position.[2]

Luzerne arrived in America at a time when Congress was most anxious for an alliance with Spain and was willing to make many concessions to obtain it.[3] The new minister landed in Boston and spent some time investigating the attitude of New England. He quickly came to the conclusion that the people of this region still desired the annexation of Canada in order to control the fisheries, and if they could not get all of Canada they would at least insist upon Nova Scotia.[4] The efforts of Gerard to induce

[2]Vergennes's instructions to Luzerne, July 18, 1779. In these instructions Vergennes spoke of the West in a very vague way. At the most he thought of leaving only the lower Mississippi in Spanish hands, while the Northwest was unsettled. Some time later he wrote that it was hardly possible "de les [English] privers la nouvelle Ecosse, le Canada, et L'Ohio . . . ." Vergennes to Montmorin, April 26, 1780. (*Esp.*, 599, no. 35, new 8.)

[3]"On [Congress] a aussi délibré sur le Traité à proposer à l'Espagne; On a conclu qu'on lui offriroit la guarantie des Florides mais on n'est pas encore convenúe definitivement si on contribueroit à lui conquête." Gerard to Vergennes, August 8, 1779. (*E. U.*, IX, new 83.)

[4]Luzerne wrote that the conquest of Canada lay near the hearts of the New Englanders because they regarded that country as a safeguard to their independence, but if they were compelled to choose between the two they would take Nova Scotia on account of the fisheries. September 3, 1779. (*Ibid.*, X, no. 4.)

this section of the country to give up all idea of conquest had proved fruitless.[5]

The Floridas, however, did not offer so difficult a problem. Congress had practically decided on a policy by which they were to go to Spain on condition that the right to navigate the Mississippi and the use of a port on the Gulf be given the United States.[6] To the Southern delegates, according to Gerard, the use of a port on the Gulf was of more importance than the right to navigate the river.[7] Gerard wished Spain to take possession of the Floridas at once, and suggested that the question of the ownership of Eastern Louisiana and the navigation of the Mississippi be left to future settlement.[8]

Both Spain and the United States, however, were insistent upon their claims to the Southwest. The points at issue were further complicated by the conflicting demands of the several states. Virginia and other states laid claim to vast regions, in virtue of their ancient charters, while the landless states held that dominion won by the common efforts should be the property of all.[9] These contentions

[5]"je me suis vivèment recrié Mgr. contre l'idée de conquerir ainsi d'un trait de plume une des possessions plus importantes de l'Angre . . . . J'ai observai qu'il n'y auroit que trop de peine à obtenir l'independance et la restitution san equivalent des Territoires conquis par les armes de Gde Bretagne." Gerard to Vergennes, March 1, 1779. (*E. U.*, VII, no. 67, new 123.)

[6]See page 128.

[7]Gerard wrote to Vergennes, September 25, that Congress would offer Spain the guarantee of the Floridas up to the thirty-first degree of latitude and even promise assistance in conquering them, on condition that Spain would grant the United States the free use of the Mississippi, and give them a port south of the thirty-first degree of latitude. (*E. U.*, X, no. 37, new 125.)

[8]Gerard to Vergennes, September 7. (*Ibid.*, no. 20, new 122.)

[9]" . . . . il est bien à craindre Monseigneur que ces avantages mêmes ne soient une cause de desordes dans la Republique amèricain et que la 1ere conquête de leur armées reunie ne repande parmi eux de nouveaux germes de disunion. Les délégues des États Limitrophes pretendent y avoir des droits incontestables en virtu de leurs Chartes . . . ." Gerard to Vergennes, November 8, 1779. (*Ibid.*, X, no. 9, new 81.)

gave Spain a decided advantage in the negotiations, an advantage which she pressed to the utmost.

For some time Miralles had taken little part in the discussions concerning the West, and, apparently without the authority of his court, had left the interests of his country to the care of Luzerne. When in November, 1779, Florida Blanca instructed his agent to seek the aid of Congress in the conquest of the Floridas and the lower Mississippi,[10] Miralles at once asked the help of Gerard. The forces of the United States had already penetrated the West, and it was plain that pressure must be brought to bear if Spain were to make good her pretentions there.[11]

Luzerne proceeded cautiously in this work. He did not explain to Congress the full purport of Miralles's instructions, but spoke at length of the necessity of cooperation between the United States and Spain. The conquest of the Southwest he represented as merely a combined attack upon the possessions of Great Britain, and he said nothing of the ultimate ownership.[12]

Congress was perfectly agreeable to the project of letting Spain have the Floridas, but it showed a determination to maintain American claims to the West.[13] Luzerne

[10]After speaking of the Floridas, Miralles said to Luzerne: "Je suis aussi chargé d'inviter l'honorable Congres a entreprendre la conquête du territoire et de possession occuper par les Anglois au Nord Est de la Louisiane et comme le Gouvernment de cette province par ses lumieres peut contribue infiniment au succes d'une pareille entreprise il desire de connoitre le plan d'operation auquel le Congres s'arreter dans cette partie." September 25, 1779. (*Papers of Continental Congress,* no. 195, vol. I, fol. 21: Letters of Luzerne.)

[11]Le succès le plus complèt a accompagné cette entreprise et les Etats unis se trouvent aujourd'hui tant par le droit de conquête que par l'emigration totale des habitans possesseurs d'une vaste et fertile contree." Luzerne to Vergennes, November 8. (*E. U.,* X, no. 9, new 81.)

[12]*Papers of Continental Congress,* no. 95; Letters of Luzerne, vol. I, fol. 25.

[13]Congress referred the matter of the Floridas to Washington, who agreed to approve the expedition as soon as the British were driven out of the Southern states. Luzerne to Vergennes, December 17, 1779. (*E. U.,* X, no. 118, new 337; *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XV, 1331-2; *ibid.,* 1387.)

hesitated to press the matter for he saw many difficulties in the way and did not dare offend the United States. Virginia claimed all the country westward to the Mississippi and was busy conquering it.[14] Under these circumstances Luzerne saw no way for Spain to get possession of this territory unless she could seize it before the Americans could further occupy it. After some effort, however, he got several members of Congress to admit that this region was not a part of the thirteen states, and as such was open to conquest by any enemy of Great Britain. They were careful to state, however, that the United States had an equal right to conquer this country; and as Americans already held Kentucky and Tennessee, and the success of George Rogers Clark seemed assured, this admission amounted to little towards forwarding the plans of Spain.[15]

[14]"M. de Miralles auroit desiré que jappuyasse ses demandes d'une maniere plus articulée que je n'ai pas fait . . . . Non obstant ses instances j'ai cru devoir me borner à des simples insinuations . . . . Vous remarquerez cependant que dans la reponse que M. le President me fait au nom du Congrés il garde le Silence Sur la requisition dont lui a fait part M. de Miralles d S'occuper de la conquête des parties de la Louisiane et dependance dont les Anglois Sont en possession Sans ajouter pour le compte de qui cette conquête doit etre fait. J'ai lieu de presumer que les intêrets de quelques États et leurs vues d'agrandissement sont cause de ce silence autant que l'Ultimatum dont M. Adams est chargé. En effet la Virginie poursuit ses Enterprises contre les parties du territoire britannique qui Se trouvent comprises entre les anciennes limites de cet Etat et le Mississipi et prétend que Sa charter lui donner des droit incontestables sur ses territoires D'un autre coté l'incertitude qui a subsisté avant la paix de 1763 touchant les anciennes limites de la Louisiane, et les lettres du Gouverneur de la havane à Don Juan paroissent à quelques égards indiquer que la Cour de Madrid a des vues Sur ces mêmes territoires, et qu'on invitant les Etats-unis à enfaire la conquête, elle supose qu'ils les lui cederont de la même maniere que la floride orientale l'être, en cas qu'ils puissant la conquerir." Luzerne to Vergennes, December 17, 1779. (*E. U.*, X, no. 18, new 118.)

[15]" . . . . il est vraisemblable qu'il ne se déterminera pas aisement a vendre ou a céder ce qu'il aura conquis. Ainsi Monsiegneur, Si la Cour [of Madrid] a reelement des projets Sur ces territoires et qu'il ayent l'aprobation du Roi, il seroit convenable que cette Cour s'occupat de leur execution, ou du moins la preparat pas des insinuations faites au Congrès tandis qu'il en est encore tems. Un nombre assez considerable de Delegues

With the bright prospects for success in the West, Congress assumed a more independent attitude towards Spain, and even threatened to hold no more communication with Miralles, unless he were officially accredited from his court.[16] They spoke boldly of Clark's conquests, and treated the interests and claims of Spain with contempt, while even France received less courtesy than formerly.

Canada again came in for a share of attention, this time doubtless through the influence of the New England delegates.[17] Washington now approved its conquest but Luzerne opposed the measure strenuously.[18] When a delegate asked for the cooperation of the French fleet, he declared that the most important duty was to drive the British from the states and then it would be honorable to offer freedom to the Canadians.[19] In this project Luzerne could see nothing but jealousy of the North towards the plans of the Southern states, and he declared that New England was ready to sacrifice the rights of her neighbors for the sake of the Canadian fisheries.[20]

The pretensions of Congress did not meet the approval of Vergennes. He declared that the guarantee of France

envisagent ces Countrees comme apartenantes réelement a l'Angleterre en virtu du Traite de Paris et non obstant les termes des differentes chartres ils sont disposés a reconnoitre le droit de la puissance enemi de la Grande Bretagne qui enfera la conquête. En attendant un officier des Troupes de Virginie comme sous le nom du Colonel Clark, homme d'un genie actif et audacieux fait dans l'Ouest des courses qu'on considera un jour comme des conquêtes et l'on m'assure d'une maniere positive que sans egard aux Stipulations du Traite du Paris cette officier s'est avancé de l'autre coté du Mississipi a une distance très considerable, et a pris possession au nom de l'Etat qu'il Sut . . . ." *E. U.*, X, no. 18, new 118.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Washington, *Writings* (Ford ed.), VIII, 138-141.

[18] Luzerne to Vergennes, December 13. (*E. U.*, X, no. 110, new 317.)

[19] Luzerne to Vergennes. (*Ibid.*, XI, no. 33.)

[20] Luzerne wrote to Vergennes in January, 1780, that the north had no disquietude for the dangers of the South, but feared more its rivalry and resources. He declared that it would without regret abandon the southern states to their fate if they thought this would help them get Canada. (*Esp.*, XI, no. 33, new 107.)

was for the independence of the United States with such possessions as they held at the end of the war. This guarantee, he maintained, did not in any sense bind the guarantor to aid in making conquests beyond the legal boundaries of the original states.[21] Vergennes had not changed his mind regarding Canada, nor had he changed his opinion of the West since issuing his first instructions to Luzerne. He felt that those who insisted upon the conquest of this territory were the enemies of peace and were seeking to embarrass Congress. The changed attitude of France was made manifest in the position of Luzerne on Spain's proposition for a settlement on the basis of *uti possidetis*. He declared that such an arrangement was not unfair, and urged Congress to use every effort to drive out the British before beginning negotiations for peace.[22] It is very improbable, however, that he had any serious thought of abandoning to the English any part of the union as he understood it,[23] and it is certain that Vergennes would not have consented to any such arrangement.

The opinions of Luzerne were duly reported to Congress, where they became the signal for many bitter speeches. Congress no longer boasted of the able men who had adorned its meetings in other years; but its members, altho narrow and resentful, were determined to thwart the purposes of Spain, and in this they received popular

[21]"Il n'en resultera autre chose sinon que le roi est actuellement et definitivement garant de leur independance et que sa garantee pour leurs possessions et conquêtes n'est que eventuelle, c'est a dire dépendantes des évenements de la guerre . . . ." Vergennes to Luzerne, September 25, 1779. (*E. U.*, X, no. 2, new 38.)

[22]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVI, 88; *E. U.*, XI, no. 36.

[23]Luzerne wrote to Vergennes, June 24, 1780, that the British were trying to persuade the people of South Carolina that their fellow states had abandoned them; and he suggested that the British were also trying to form a new colonial empire out of the Carolinas, Georgia, the Floridas and the Bahamas. Luzerne felt that, in spite of its dissensions, Congress would not consent to sacrifice any of the states. (*E. U.*, XII, no. 118, new 396.)

support.[24] They declared that it was the purpose of the Bourbon powers to break up the union; and they started an opposition to the influence of them both which did not subside during the war, and which made agreement between the United States and Spain impossible. The feeling in Congress was intensified by further attempts of Luzerne in behalf of Spanish pretentions. Spain had presented an "ultimatum" to Great Britain, and in the discussion of this with Congress Luzerne had asked that body to explain itself on four questions at issue. These were the western boundary of the United States; the navigation of the Mississippi; possession of the Floridas; the lands on the left or eastern bank of the Mississippi.[25] Before giving Congress an opportunity to answer Luzerne proceeded to state the contentions of Spain. He argued, in her behalf, that the boundaries of the United States extended no farther to the west than the headwaters of the streams flowing into the Atlantic, and for this he cited the royal proclamation of 1763. If this were true the United States would nowhere border on the Mississippi and hence had no claim to navigate that river. This proclamation also cut off the Floridas from the United States according to the Spanish contention. None of this territory, Luzerne maintained, was part of the original colonies, and so could not be a part of the United States.[26]

These proposals aroused considerable surprise and much indignation among the members of Congress. The delegates argued that they had a just claim to all the lands as far as the Mississippi, not only by right of conquest but by the grant of the colonial charters. They declared further that the treaty of 1763 had assured the right to Great Britain of the free navigation of the Mississippi, and they claimed the same right for themselves. They

[24]Les Articles de l'Ultimatum . . . . commencent a être connu dans les Etats de l'Est et la fermentations qu'ils excitent parmi le peuple dans les villes de Commerce Seroit d'un nature inquietude." Luzerne to Vergennes, January 16, 1780. *(E. U.,* XI, no. 25, new 18.)

[25]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVI, 114.

[26]*Ibid.*

would agree to restrict the navigation to merchant vessels, but they insisted upon the right to trade. Nothing was said of the ownership of lands along the lower Mississippi, for this question was included in the larger question of boundaries. To Spanish control of the Floridas no objection was made.

The discussion of the Spanish proposition extended over many days and gave rise to much bitterness. The possession of the West had never before been questioned in Congress, and Luzerne himself had not been aware of Spain's ambitions until Miralles had communicated to him the instructions which he had received the preceding November. Luzerne knew the hopes of Congress from the instructions to Jay; but, nevertheless, he spoke to several members of the desires of Spain, from none of whom he received a favorable reply. He found that the delegates from the Southern and Middle states were firm in the persuasion that "the lands which extend from the Atlantic to the Mississippi in parallel lines from the equator belong to them, either in virtue of their charters or of divers acts of possession.[27] Some of the Eastern delegates were more moderate and recognized that if the Spanish should drive the English out of any part of this territory it would be difficult to get them to surrender it, but this view was not the prevalent one in Congress.

As the discussion continued, the indignation of the southern members increased to white heat. Burke of North Carolina exclaimed, "I know the force and the extent of our charters and of our rights, and if those of my constituents in the territories in question are not clear and certain, our rights on the Atlantic coast are equally obscure and doubtful, for they emanate from the same source."[28]

[27]Luzerne to Vergennes, January 25. (*E. U.*, XI, no. 27, new 33.)

[28]"J'ai trouvé ceux du Sud et du Centre dans la ferme persuasion que les terres qui s'etendent dequis la mer atlantique jusqu'au Mississipi [belong to them] soit en virtu de leurs Chartres, soit en virtu de divers actes de possession. . . . ." Luzerne to Vergennes, February 11. (*Ibid.*, no. 30, new 53, fol. 190.)

The committee of Congress which had been designated to treat with Luzerne based the claim of the United States to the West on four acts: the colonial charters, the treaty of Paris of 1763, the proclamation of the king of England in the same year, and the terms of the treaty of alliance with France.[29]

The arguments were long and tedious and revealed a fundamental difference in the views of the two sides. In regard to the Treaty of Paris, Luzerne pointed out that it had ceded Eastern Louisiana and its dependencies, not to the colonies, who could not enter into a treaty, but to the king of England. Before this time France had possessed this territory and it had never been incorporated with the colonies; now Spain was merely trying to reconquer it from a nation with which she was at war. In a case of this kind, he argued, possession was the best title and Spain held it in virtue of her forces already in the country. The ambition of Great Britain, he held, had forced France and Spain again to take up arms; and as a result the whole treaty of Paris was subject to modification.

This argument did not convince the committee, which insisted that Great Britain had never acknowledged the claims of France to this country, and had gone to war and won her contention. They argued that the position of France on this question had been from the beginning a mistaken one and that the West had always belonged to the colonies in virtue of their charters.

The charters presented a difficult problem and one on which there was destined to be no agreement. Luzerne declared that there could be no binding force in such documents unless they were backed by actual possession. He remarked that they had been carelessly drawn, and in many cases contradicted each other so that there was no

[29] *E. U.*, XI, no. 30, new 53, fol. 190. The account of Luzerne of his discussions with this committee is the only one I have seen and this states in the merest outline the arguments of those who wished to keep the West.

agreement among the states as to just what they meant. With such a condition of affairs, he asked if a foreign power could be expected to accept them when they violated claims founded upon actual possession.

In regard to the proclamation of 1763, Luzerne remarked that he did not see how the colonies could claim any territory which was not legally theirs even under the English government. He pointed out that by this proclamation the royal governors were forbidden to make any grants west of the head waters of the rivers flowing into the Atlantic.

The Americans replied that this provision was the source of many protests and almost universal discontent and was not accepted by the colonies. They pointed out also the provision in the proclamation that the act should not contradict the grants of the colonial charters. The reservation, they declared, was for the protection of the Indians, and was not a limitation of the rights of the colonies. Congress would likely pursue the same policy, they asserted, and it had the right which previously belonged to the British government to buy these lands to the exclusion of any other power.[30]

The fourth point of the argument of the committee that the treaty of alliance with France guaranteed to the United States the possession of the West was met by a flat denial from Luzerne. In this he was acting in accord with Vergennes's interpretation of the treaty: that France guaranteed the United States as they actually were at that time with such other territory as they could conquer.[31] To this contention the Americans made no objection and the matter was allowed to drop.

These arguments produced no results and the opinions of each side remained unchanged. Luzerne claimed that the United States had no right to these territories, because they had never held possession of them, and could

[30]It is curious that the members of this committee did not point out the provision of the proclamation which declared that the reservation was "for the present."

[31]See Vergennes's instructions to Luzerne, p. 151.

make no claim in virtue of the sovereignty of Great Britain, a sovereignty which they had renounced.[32] Spain, however, went further, and demanded that the states refrain from all settlements or conquests in the West, and leave the whole Mississippi Valley to her possession.[33]

The questions of the Floridas and the lands along the lower Mississippi were put into the background by the great contention over the West, and even the navigation of the Mississippi received little attention. The Floridas Congress was willing to concede to Spain; and it could offer little objection to Spanish conquests on the lower Mississippi. Galvez had already gained possession of Natchez, and the Spaniards hoped he would extend his conquest farther to the north. Luzerne was beginning to discuss the purchase of these territories when news of the victories of Galvez arrived.[34] Congress realized that the United States could not drive Spain from territories which she had conquered, and all claim to West Florida was given up.

Only one matter connected with the Floridas aroused any difference of opinion. Congress had fixed the boundary of the Floridas in accordance with the proclamation of 1763; but Spain wished to extend it farther north. The question, however, remained an open one until after the Revolution was over.[35]

Luzerne himself admitted that his arguments had not produced a great impression on Congress, and he advised

[32]This whole argument is reported in Luzerne's letter to Vergennes of February 11. *E. U.*, XI, no. 30, new 53, fol. 190.

[33]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVI, 115.

[34]Luzerne to Vergennes, February 11. (*E. U.*, XI, no. 30, fol. 53); March 13 (*ibid.*, no. 33, fol. 79); March 18 (*ibid.*, no. 35, fol. 87.)

[35]"La Cour de Madrid desira peutêtre de leur donner plus d'etendüe au nord audela du trente unieme degré de latitude; mais le Congres est d'opinion que Sa Mte Cathe trouve d'autant plus d'avantage dans la Fixation presente que les florides ne s'etendoient du coté du nord est sous la domination Espagnoles que jusqu'a la Riviere St. Jean tandis que la proclamation leur assignoit la Riviere St. Marie pour limite actuelle." Luzerne to Vergennes, February 11, 1780. (*Ibid.*, XI, no. 30, new 53, fol. 190.)

that if Spain wanted the territory in dispute she had better seize it. Within a month news reached Philadelphia that Spain held all the lower Mississippi and Miralles had this report published in the papers with the intimation that Spain would hold it.[36] This report still further aroused indignation in America. It was objected that the conquest of a small corner of a vast region did not give a just claim to the whole extent of territory. If such an argument should be conclusive, it was urged, the conquest of Clark had already given the United States title to the whole valley.[37]

There were also other sources of indignation. Many people held grants of land in this region, and they complained that they were being robbed.[38] This complaint gave Congress a new ground on which to base its contentions. It now came forward with the claim that the title of the United States was good by right of conquest and occupation. This occupation went back several years and, it was urged, gave the republic a priority of claim over the Spaniards. Luzerene attempted to evade this reasoning by stating that the settlements were made by the authority of the British crown, and as such were still subject to conquest.[39]

[36]Luzerne to Vergennes, March 13. *E. U.*, XI, no. 33, fol. 79.)

[37]"Le Ciel veuille nous preserver . . . . de l'idée d'une contestation avec l'Espagne, mais vous conviendrez que pour avoir conquis un angle de terre voisin des bouches du Mississipi et de la Riviere Iberville cette Puissance n'est pas en droit de dire qu'un Pais de cinq cent lieus d'entendire est tombé ausson pouvoir et de s'en attribuer la Souveranete. J'ai deja entendu parler de donner des renfort au Colonel Clarke pour la mettre en etat de conquerir de son et vous voiez lesconsequences de ce sisteme." Luzerne's account of a statement by Mathews, a delegate. *Ibid.*

[38]Land had been granted by the several states, and there were companies organized to exploit these grants. *Ibid.*

[39]Luzerne answered that the American occupation did not give any more right to the subjects of the thirteen states than it would have given to France, to Poland, or to Germany, if after the Peace of Paris the French, the Poles, or the Germans had settled in that part of ancient Louisiana. *Ibid.*

Miralles was greatly worried by the tone of Luzerne's negotiations, and began to doubt the influence of his friend. Luzerne had suggested that the two proceed boldly to force through the wishes of Spain, but Miralles would not agree to this. He ridiculed the claims of Congress but insisted that he must wait for further instructions. He finally asked Luzerne to take no further part in the negotiations, for "it would pain him to see an affair of particular interest to the king treated by another than himself."[40] Soon after this the Spanish agent died, begging Luzerne not to interfere again in the relations of his country with Congress.[41]

When the report of Luzerne on his conference with the members of Congress reached Vergennes, the latter replied in a way notable for its moderation. He spoke highly of the justice of Congress in leaving the Floridas to Spain and ordered Luzerne not to give any ministerial views of the points in controversy. He expressed great fear that the question might cause much trouble between the two countries, and asked Luzerne to be careful of the feelings of both allies of the king. Altho he still felt that Spain had a right to conquer the territory in question, he admitted that the Americans had some cause to be angry. He hinted that the question would likely be settled by the forbearance of Spain, who would, probably of her own free will, surrender all claim to the lands east of the Mississippi, and would also allow the Americans some right to navigate the river. He felt that if the Americans would only be easy with Florida Blanca, they would likely get what they wanted.[42]

[40] *E. U.*, XI, no. 33, fol. 79.

[41] Luzerne to Montmorin, May 7. (*Esp.*, 599, no. 16, new 25.) Luzerne says that Miralles had explained his motives to the court of Spain. What these motives were can probably be learned only from the Spanish archives.

[42] "Ce n'est pas à nous à decider cette question et la prudence nous fait un devoir d'autant plus stricte de ne pas articuler d'opinion a cet egard. Sans être provoque que si l'Espagne veut conserver les terreins

Luzerne ceased formal negotiations with Congress early in 1780; but he could not refrain from private efforts on behalf of Spain. He first approached the president of Congress, Samuel Huntington of Connecticut, and his friends. He succeeded in arousing their jealousy of the West by calling attention to the great immigration which would inevitably set in from the East to these fertile valleys. He declared that the possession of the Mississippi Valley would never be a source of strength to the United States, but would cause constant friction with Spain.[43] He used again the arguments against the legality of the American claims, and felt that he had gone far towards winning support for his favorite project. He tried next the delegates from New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. These states had little interest in the western lands, and he felt he could count on their support. He found them in a state of indifference but unwilling to take a decided stand against the wishes of the other states. Even Virginia showed no great hostility to the projects of Luzerne, for the County of Kentucky had just declared its independence, and in this they thought they saw the beginning of the dissolution of the states.[44]

contestés Elle donnera certainment de l'ombrage aux Americains tandisque cette Puissance prendre de l'humeur. . . . . Si je suis bien informé le Ministre espagnol n'est pas très eloigné d'abandonner aux americains les rives orientales du Mississipi au dela des florides et même de leur accorder une navigation quelqonque sur ce fleuve." Vergennes to Luzerne, June 3, 1780. (*E. U.*, XII, no. 7, fol. 61.)

[43]Luzerne to Montmorin, May 12. (*Esp.*, 599, no. 49, new 106.)

[44]Luzerne to Vergennes, June 11, 1780 (*E.U.*, XII, no. 54, new 74.) "Dans mes intretiens avec les Individus qui les composent ceux du Nord se sont montrés asses raisonables et sont convinus du principe que l'ancienne Louisiane orientale étant actuellement entre les mains de l'angleterre, les apartances ayant été cedeés a la paix de 1763 l'Espagne avoit le droit incontestables d'en faire la conquête. Cette verité si claire est egalement reconnué par le Congrès general et plusiers Membres de l'Etat du New York. . . . ." In regard to Virginia he said that she appeared less attached than formerly to holding the West. "Ce changement est peutetre dû a une circonstance . . . . c'est que les habitans des parties de cet Etat, qui sont eloignées du Siege du Government annonce dans

Maryland was pronounced by the French minister to be the best disposed of all the states to the desires of Spain. She had no interest in the West, and at least one of her delegates, Jenifer, was intensely jealous of the power of the larger states. He not only admitted the rights of Spain to conquer as much of the West as she could, but declared that she had a perfect right to conquer any of the states if she found them in British hands.[45] Here was a man who could perform valuable services for the Spanish cause, and Luzerne enlisted him at once and through him urged his arguments upon Congress.

There was, however, a strong opposition to the schemes of Luzerne. The old Junto had broken up, but the lead had been taken up by the vehement and zealous Burke of North Carolina. The two had constantly held opposite opinions and had not infrequently clashed. His opposition was of a character to arouse fear in the mind of the French minister and his fiery denunciations had doubtless terrified Miralles into silence. Burke denounced the ambitions of Spain as overbearing and unjust, as prejudicial to the rights of the states, and contrary to their happiness and tranquillity. Luzerne greatly feared that he would seize a favorable opportunity to sweep all Congress to his side and arouse it to lay claim to the Floridas as well as to the West.[46] Henceforth there were two well defined parties

ce moment des vues d'independance et le projet de former un etat particulier." This incident, he declares, makes them fear "l'inconvenient des possessions distantes et trop etendues et la danger d'un dismemberment ou d'une dissolution de l'Etat." *E. U.*, XII, no. 54, new 74.

[45]Le Maryland est l'Etat dont les sentimens sur cette matiere sont les plus raisonnables et les mieux articulés Un delegué de cet Etat, homme qui jouit d'une grande influence n'hesite point a dire que non seulement l'Espagne peut sans aucune contradiction faire cette conquête mais que n'ayant pris aucun engagement avec le Congrès si aujourd'hui elle enlevant aux Anglois l'Etat de la Georgie que est entre leurs mains." *Ibid.*

[46]"M. Burke homme ardent et obstiné quoique d'ailleurs bon Citoyen regarde les projets de l'Espagne comme injustes contraires aux droits des Treize Etats et prejudiciables a leur bonheurs et a leur tranquilité

in Congress, the French and Spanish party with Jenifer for spokesman, and the opposition under the radical leadership of Burke.

The ability and enthusiasm of Burke won many delegates who had previously been friendly to the ideas of Spain. One delegate from New York told Luzerne that he could, without any complaint from his constituents, renounce in favor of France Canada and Nova Scotia because they were not included in the charters of the states; but if he should vote to surrender Eastern Louisiana, he would expose himself to the charge that he had sold the interests of the southern and middle states for money, and of having violated the sacred laws of the union in sacrificing some states for the gain of others.[47]

Still Luzerne did not give up his efforts. He urged that the United States could never conquer the western territories on account of the power of Spain. He again besought Congress to trust to the generosity of His Catholic Majesty; but the only promise he could gain was that nothing should be done until Jay's report should arrive. Luzerne was not satisfied with this, for he feared that the report of Jay's mission would produce more ill feeling, and he did all he could in advance to discount its effects. But while he was urging the Americans to conciliation, he was trying to get Spain to conquer the West.[48]

In the midst of these discussions the project for the conquest of Canada was revived. This time there was a coalition between the North and South, for New England,

et si les relations de M. Jay donnent lieu au Congres de faire quelque alteration a son ultimatum. je crains toute de la vehemence de ce Délégué." *E. U.*, XII, no. 54, new 74.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] "Dans cette état des choses je crois que la Cour de Madrid ne peut mieux faire que de poursuivre la conquête qu'elle a commencée et d'exercer sur les Pais nouvelement soumis a sa Domination tous les Actes de souveraineté de Jurisdiction et de possession qu'elle jugera les plus propres a detruire, dans l'esprit des Americains l'espoir chimerique qu'ils ont conçu de les conquerir sur l'Angleterre ou du moins de les acquirer par le Traite de paix." *Ibid.*

in the hope of getting some part of Canada, was willing to support the southern pretentions. As a result of this combination Luzerne was left without the support of any section.

The British aided Luzerne in his efforts to break this coalition between the two sections. They showed great harshness towards the North and prepared to defend Canada against any assault.[49] The southern states were the object of their concern and they sought to win them over by the charge that their northern compatriots had deserted them. It was their aim to hold the three southern states even tho the others should succeed in maintaining their independence. These southern states were in the hands of the British army and it appeared impossible for Congress to recover them.

In spite of the fact that their states were in the hands of the enemy, the southerners kept up their representation in Congress; and many, expelled from their homes, came to Philadelphia to get assistance against the enemy. Luzerne thought this a favorable moment to get them to yield their claims in return for Spanish assistance and sought to push his measures regardless of the position of Congress.[50] He called first on Governor Rutledge of South Carolina, who, he found, had no suspicion of the ambitions of Spain. He was totally ignorant of the points of difference betwen Congress and the court of Madrid, but it had never occurred to him to surrender the western lands.[51] When he learned that Spain laid claim to the east bank of the Missisippi and had already attempted to possess it,

[49]Luzerne to Vergennes, June 24. (*E. U.*, XII, no. 118, fol. 396.)

[50]Luzerne to Montmorin, July 11. (*Esp.*, 599, no. 182.)

[51]Rutledge asked Luzerne if Spain did not want the Mississippi as far as the thirty-first parallel, but spoke with great confidence of her good intentions. He said that the Spanish governor at New Orleans had replied to a request for help in a way to convince the Carolinians of the sincere interest which His Catholic Majesty had in the preservation of their independence. Luzerne to Vergennes, August 3. (*E. U.*, XIII, no. 90, fol. 224.)

his attitude became at once suspicious and even hostile. He insisted that the southern states would never agree to any such conditions; and that if Spain attempted to extend her sovereignty over these regions, she would expose herself to perpetual war. "Congress cannot see without jealousy," he exclaimed, "another nation in possession of this territory with power to incite the savages against us and to expose our frontier to continual invasion." If such principles were just, he argued, Spain would have a right to conquer Canada as well in spite of the danger it would bring to the United States.[52]

The discussions between Rutledge and Luzerne followed the lines usual in the debates on this subject. Luzerne made more emphatic the loss of population which the older states must surely suffer if the West were incorporated into the union. He declared that the balance of power would surely shift beyond the mountains and finally the government itself would be directed from the banks of the Mississippi. Rutledge replied that there was no danger, for the West should be formed into separate states, entirely independent of the East or confederated with the older states on terms of equality.

The attitude of Rutledge is typical of the state of public feeling among patriotic Americans. He did not realize that Spain had any interest in the West, nor did he believe that she had any right to it. Eastern Louisiana had been for many years recognized as a part of the colonial domain, and it seemed incredible that another power could have any claim to it. The feeling of the country was being reflected in Congress, and this body took a definite stand on the question of the West in its instructions to Jay.

Against the historic belief of the American states was opposed the jealousy and greed of Spain. Greed and jealousy both were there; that insatiable greed for land and wealth that had been the curse of the Spanish monarchy; jealousy that feared the rise of a new power which might

[52] *E. U.*, XIII, no. 90, fol. 224.

attain a degree of prosperity and strength that would rival her own. Jealousy in this case was stronger than greed, but perhaps it was a jealousy not unmixed with fear. Spain had no need for the fertile plains of Eastern Louisiana, while across the river were boundless regions of her own territories, still undeveloped and as yet hardly touched by cultivation. The east bank of the Mississippi was beginning to show traces of improvement under the labors of the hardy frontiersman; but there was not yet enough to tempt the cupidity of Spain. It was jealousy that sought to coop the new republic between the Alleghanies and the sea. It was jealousy that opposed the independence of the United States, that had dictated the proposed mediation by the terms of which Great Britain was to hold the ports that controlled the ingress and egress from the country, and it was this same jealousy that opposed the union of Canada to the young nation. This passion assumed many forms. Now it was the fear of the example of rebellion before the Spanish colonies; again it was the menace of a new power on her frontiers; then it was the desire to recover the historic empire of France; and finally it was the pretense of rendering justice to the British crown.

Vergennes had long understood this feeling of the Spanish court,[53] and it was one of the chief objects of his diplomacy to render it harmless. After the convention of 1779 he sought to bring his allies into a new triple alliance against the power of the British Empire. The prime object of the war, as he often declared, was to secure the independence of the United States without sacrificing any part of them. This was a big guarantee and Spain insisted upon and enforced the principle that she should be given equal

[53]Vergennes repeatedly expressed his lack of confidence in the justice of Spain. In 1780 he declared that the principle of personal interest directs the conduct of Spain towards the United States. (*Esp.*, 598, no. 37, new 106.) He declared that it was useless to try to convert Florida Blanca to a more reasonable view, but that France must maintain her position with firmness. April 12, 1781. (*Ibid.*, 603, no. 25, new 57.) Montmorin also held this opinion. (*Ibid.*, 598, no. 110, new 321.)

advantages. From the first Vergennes had found his task a trying one; and altho he was frequently the dupe of Spain, he strove faithfully to fulfil his obligation to both his allies. The exclusive navigation of the Mississippi was immensely valuable in the eyes of Spain in order to insure her control of the Gulf of Mexico; but Vergennes did not see how the right to navigate this river could be of any use to the sparsely populated regions of the West. His wish to restrain the Americans from a spirit of conquest in the West can in no sense be taken as a decision against the rights of the states to their western boundaries. It did not mean that he was seeking to give this region to Spain, for at the same time he asked for his other ally only the province of West Florida which was guaranteed to her by the treaty of alliance.

The acts of Luzerne can not be taken as representing the will of his court. Vergennes knew nothing of the West and as a result he sometimes fell a victim to misrepresentations. Luzerne had been instructed to look after the interests of Spain, and he attempted to do so with more ardor than discretion. In these instructions he found reference to some "lands on the Mississippi conquered by the English" and directions to "prevent encroachments,"[54] which seemed to fit into the purpose of Miralles and he acted accordingly. In this matter Luzerne plainly exceeded his instructions which did not authorize him to do anything contrary to the wishes of Congress; and Vergennes later

[54]Vergennes wrote that as there were some lands on the Mississippi conquered by the English, of which they would probably be dispossessed, their occupation would likely cause contentions between Spain and the United States. On this account he asked Luzerne to try to get the boundary fixed in a "maniere claire, précise, et invariable." Also he asked him to use his influence with Congress to get it to "Empêcher les Provinces du Sud de se laisser aller à l'esprit de Conquête." These instructions clearly refer to the lands along the lower Mississippi which Spain was preparing to conquer. In regard to the whole question he wrote, "that he was ignorant of the rights of the states." Vergennes to Luzerne, July 18, 1779. (*E. U.*, IX, no. 41.)

instructed him definitely not to push the ambitions of Spain.[55]

When the contest over Eastern Louisiana became acute, Vergennes again refused to interfere more than to advise the Americans to appeal to the generosity of the king of Spain. He frankly admitted that he did not know the merits of the case but expressed his satisfaction with the liberality of the Americans in leaving the Floridas to Spain.[56] As a matter of law he expressed the belief that Spain had a right to conquer Eastern Louisiana from the British; but he urged his minister not to interfere or even to express an opinion on the subject. He realized that it was a delicate question, and that if France wished to keep the good will of both her allies she must not take part in their disputes. All he authorized Luzerne to do was to try to persuade Congress of the justice of the Catholic King.[57] All the privately expressed opinions and public despatches of Vergennes indicate a strong interest in the welfare of the American republic.[58] He was willing to reward Spain for her services, but he never offered her more of the

[55]See p. 163. That the policy of Miralles was new to him and a complete surprise, he was frank to confess and he might well have assumed that his master was as ignorant as he of the wishes of Spain.

[56]He urged that the Americans could get more out of Spain if they said nothing of their rights, and in this he was probably not mistaken. Vergennes to Luzerne, September 25, 1779. (*E. U.*, X, no. 38, fol. 126.)

[57]See p. 163, note 42. After the death of Miralles left the care of Spanish interests in the hands of Luzerne, Vergennes wrote, ". . . . mais le reserve que je vous recommende M. ne doit pas vous empêcher de profiter des occasions que l'on fournir pour porter le Congres à prendre confiance dans le Roi Cath. et a traiter Sans prevention la question relative aux terreins situes sur le Mississipi." August 7, 1780. (*Ibid.*, XIII, no. 8, fol. 101.)

[58]An example of Vergennes's care for the interests of the United States is shown in a particular project to Lafayette in which he advised him of the course America should take. He suggested helping Spain conquer the Floridas, but he urged that the Americans should drive the enemy as far as possible from their borders. He declared that there would be great danger to the republic if Great Britain were left in possession of any part of America. And still he asked nothing for France. Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 318.

American continent than the Floridas. On the other hand he always insisted upon as the first fruits of the war, the independence of the United States in their fullest extent. To justify to Vergennes the American right to the Mississippi was to insure his best efforts to secure it, and so it was with other questions. And this determination to secure the full rights of his ally remained his to the end.

# CHAPTER IX

## TRIUMPH OF THE ANTI-GALLICAN PARTY.

The efforts of Luzerne had left Congress in a state of indecision and the direction of further negotiations at Philadelphia hung upon the success of Jay. If Spain showed a favorable demeanor towards the new nation, her agents could hope for many concessions; if she frowned upon its ambitions, the work of bringing about an agreement must be begun again. Under these conditions all factions waited anxiously for news from Spain. Some hoped for a message recording failure; but the more moderate element in Congress expected an account of mutual concessions. Luzerne feared that nothing would be accomplished and did his best to prepare Congress for such intelligence. He knew from Miralles that the American demands could not be granted, and he feared that Spain would reject all overtures for an alliance.

The dispatches of Jay, giving an account of his activities during the spring of 1780, reached Philadelphia in August[1], and were not so unfavorable as Luzerne had feared. The demands of Florida Blanca for the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi were not unexpected, and his suggestion for the settlement of the western boundaries appeared so vague that no one could understand them, altho the intention of Spain did not go beyond securing enough of the eastern bank of the Mississippi to control the navigation. He had mentioned Cape Antoine and another cape with the name blank[2]. Where Cape Antoine was no one knew; and there were various opinions as to what the other cape might be. No one could say in what direction the line was to be drawn, but Luzerne suggested that it was a meridian drawn as far as Spain should wish

[1]Journals of Continental Congress (Hunt ed.), XVII, 727, 737, 749.
[2]Jay to Congress, (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, III, 724.)

to prolong it[3], and this was the occassion of much more discussion. If the line extended as far as Lake Michigan, it was declared that all the western possessions of the southern states would be cut off and their boundaries greatly reduced.

The prospect of such an arrangement aroused once more the southern delegates. Even those who had shown friendliness to the plans of Luzerne went over to the other side. Among these was Jones of Virginia, who had previously informed the French minister that he regarded the ambitions of his state as a "cause of feebleness and ruin." He now complained that the greed of Spain would deprive his state of the richest part of her patrimony, and to that he declared he would never submit. Furthermore, Spain could never control this territory, he asserted, for the people who live there would never endure her yoke. Jones declared that Cape Antoine was fifteen leagues above the mouth of the Ohio, and that if Spain should get this concession, "our most beautiful territory will be threatened with invasion; we shall see ourselves despoiled of the lands washed by the Ohio and the rivers Cherokas [Tennessee] and Cumberland which flow through and water the richest country of the continent [we shall see ourselves despoiled of] the numerous population who possess it; and those

[3]"On a cherché le premier cap. Quelques délégués étoient d'opinion qu'il s'agessoit de la pointe la plus occidentale de l'Isle de Cube, et dans cette hypothèse le Congrès a cherché a donner diverses interpretations a une designation aussi obscure. L'on a demandé dans quelle direction la ligne seroit surée et lorsqu'il a été compris quelle devoit former une medidienne, on a recherché jusqu'a quelle hauteur l'Espagne entendoit la prolonger si c'est jusqu'au lac Moschigan. Tous les Etats du Sud seroient reduits, a l'on dit à des sacrifices qu'ils ne feront jamais, et la Virginie, le plus puissant et le plus ambitieux de tous perdroit le plus à cette arrangement aussi cette opinion a été rejetée bien loin." Luzerne to Vergennes, August 25, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIII, new 150.) According to Lieutenant Ross's map (published in London, 1772) Cape Antoine was situated on the west bank of the Mississippi River, about fifty miles above the mouth of the Ohio. I have this information from Professor C. W. Alvord.

whose labors have made it valuable, will be forced to abandon it."[4]

On the question of the navigation of the Mississippi Jones showed himself equally obstinate. His personal feelings, he admitted, favored conceding it to Spain, but the instructions of his state were different and he must obey them. This river and the St. Lawerence were the only natural outlets to the Mississippi Valley, he declared, and the people settled there had so long enjoyed the use of both that they would not consent to be deprived of them.

Luzerne, however, resolved once more to take up the cudgels for the court of Madrid. He declared that since Spain held both banks of the river there was nothing for the people of the West to do but to submit. As for the boundaries, Spain had as good a right to conquer this part of the British Empire as had the states. He advised, however, that if Congress wanted anything it had better throw itself on the generosity of the Spanish King.[5]

Jones was not at all satisfied with the position of the French minister and sought to argue against it. He observed that, if Spain had a right to conquer the western ter-

[4]After this plea Jones became more defiant and continued: "Nous n'avons pas la force necessaire pour obliger ces colons a s'expatrier d'une terre defrichée par leurs mains et arrosée de leur sueur. *E. U.*, XIII, new 150.

[5]"J'ai objecté....que l'occupation seule ne constituoit pas de droit que la Cour d'Espagne mettroit, lorsquil lui plairoit un frein aux excursions de ces Colons, quelque nombreuse que fût leur population qu'elle avoit conquis les forts Anglois sur le Mississippi qu'elle en avoit elle même eleve d'autres et qu'elle commanderoit tellement la navigation du Mississippi que tout leurs efforts ne pourroient la leur faire partager; Qu'il ne falloit donc pas songer à s'en emparer comme d'un droit même à la demander comme une condition necessaire que de pareilles pretentions ne feroient qu' indisposer la Cour d' Espagne tandis qu'en lui demandant cette liberté de naviguer comme une faveur et avec les restrictions necessaires pour empecher la contrabande on devoit esperer de la générosité de Sa M. Cathe quant aux limites de l'Ouest qu'il voyoit comme moi que l'Espagne étoit en droit de s'emparer de tout ce qui apartinoit a l'Angleterre en virtu du Traité de Paris que je ne pouvois dire avec precision quelles étoient ses vues actuelle mais que je pensois qu'elles ne pouvoient s'entendu au dela de ce que nous avons possidé au du posseder a la rive gauche du Mississipi." *Ibid.*

ritories of the country, it had an equal right to attack any place then in possession of the English, such as Georgia, South Carolina, or New York.

To this view Luzerne fully agreed, but replied that the friendship of Spain was such that she would make no unjust demands. He returned, however, to his suggestion that Spain would probably want the east bank of the Mississippi and he urged that Congress should grant the request, relying only on the generosity of His Majesty to do what was just to the United States.

With the demands of Luzerne there came a division between him and the French party in Congress, and there came also a closer drawing of issues. Before this, Congress had been unwilling to refuse the more extreme demands of Spain; but it now felt independent and began to suspect the intentions of France.

At this time Jenifer was absent and his aid was sorely needed by the French minister. With the defection of Jones there was no one on whom to rely and he was compelled to go in person to learn the designs of the anti-Gallicans. The committee told him that the instructions to be given to Jay on the question of the Mississippi would be such as Spain would accept; but the members refused to commit themselves regarding the boundaries.[6] Luzerne was not content and went to other members, whom he found agreeable enough in conversation, but who persisted in opposing his plans in Congress.[7] At the same time there was apparent a movement among the northern members to support the pretensions of the South, and Luzerne conjectured that they were planning another attack on Canada. This belief soon become a certainty and Luzerne learned that that country was to be sought as a pledge for the evacuation of the southern states. He did not believe, however, that the English would be willing to make the exchange, and he

[6]Luzerne to Vergennes, August 25, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIII, no. 73, new 150; *Esp.*, 600, no. 8, new 108.)

[7]*Ibid.*

thought they would attempt to unite the South with the Floridas to form a new colony.[8]

Deprived of any active assistance from the Americans, Luzerne enlisted the services of his secretary Marbois and the two planned to curb any radical policy that should get free rein in Congress. The two found it difficult to get definite information, and Congress itself, torn by the fear of losing the assistance of Spain and the desire to hold the Mississippi, was undecided what course to take.[9] It soon became clear, however, that this body would not yield. A delegate one day informed Luzerne that Congress was disposed to grant Jay greater discretion in regard to the Mississippi river; but on further discussion he revealed that this discretion would allow only a more systematic regulation of contraband.[10]

On the question of the disposition of the western territories there were numerous opinions. Many members thought the report of Jay was so vague that they could take no action on it and wished to wait for further advices.[11] Luzerne regarded this delay as favorable to the Spanish interests; and he and his secretary strained every nerve to win over a majority of Congress. In these negotiations he labored under a great disadvantage in having no precise instructions from Spain and in not knowing the exact limit of her pretensions. Eagerly he searched the papers of Miralles, left in the hands of the dead Spaniard's secretary, but he found no trace of instructions from Florida Blanca. Anxiously he awaited the arrival of a new Spanish agent, who could furnish definite information.[12] The legal status of the West also claimed the attention of the learned Marbois. With members of Congress he

[8] *E. U.*, XIII, no. 74, new 152.

[9] *Ibid.*, XIII, no. 80, new 186.

[10] *Ibid.*, no. 78, new 176.

[11] Luzerne to Vergennes. (*Ibid.*) Marbois to Vergennes. (*Ibid.*, XIV, no. 88, new 14.)

[12] Luzerne to Vergennes, September 19, 1780. (*Ibid.*, XIII, no. 80, new 186.)

went over the charters of the different states, compared them and pointed out that they were "contradictory, inconsistent and ridiculous." In them he found imaginary boundaries and designations of countries that never existed. Under his logic and ridicule the claim of immemorial right was abandoned and Congress took its position on the ground of occupation and possession.[13]

Borne down by the arguments of the Frenchman, several members of Congress indicated their willingness to accept a compromise. They suggested the cession to Spain of the lands between the Mississippi and the right bank of the Appalachicola, as far north as the river Tennessee.[14] In these overtures Luzerne had little faith; for they were bitterly attacked by the southern states, which raised the cry that Spain was seeking their dismemberment, and many northern delegates, anxious to gain Canada, supported their contentions. One member brought to memory an old resolution that the thirteen states were indissolubly united, and argued from this that Congress must maintain the right of the states to all their possessions and in no case could it allow any diminution of territory.[15] He demanded that it declare in precise fashion the exact limits of the various states and draw up a mutual guarantee to maintain them. Another delegate, in his anger, proposed that, in case the Spanish court did not admit the American claims, Jay should be ordered to break off negotiations and quit the country. Wiser counsels prevailed and neither of these propositions passed. Congress did not wish to lose the aid of Spain by displeasing her but it put faith in Jay's suggestion that if it remained firm she would "finally be content with equitable regulations.[16]

[13]Marbois to Vergennes, September 30, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIII, no. 85, new 211.)

[14]Luzerne to Vergennes, September 8, 1780. (*Ibid.*, XIII, no. 78, new 176.)

[15]*Ibid.* Luzerne states that these were the motives but they are not given in any of the published journals of Congress.

[16]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, III, no. 725.

The decision in regard to new instructions to Jay hung fire until the beginning of October. Every day was expected to bring a letter giving fuller and more definite explanation of Spain's proposed boundary. Congress itself appeared to the French embassy hopelessly divided on the question. Some wished to follow Jay's advice to remain firm; others insisted that the states should make reasonable sacrifices for the common good. So opposed were the opinions that many would not discuss them at all for fear of violent and bitter debates.[17]

Jay had asked for definite instructions, and at last Jenifer insisted that they be given him. "Decency, the regard due to Spain, and the interests of the states," he said, "demand that we should consider this affair without delay."[18] He then moved that Jay be instructed to promise Spain satisfaction on the points in dispute,[19] and defended his proposition in a lengthy speech, describing the failures of the last campaign and the necessity of help from Spain if independence were to be secured.[20] Many speeches were made in answer to his argument and the whole question of the boundaries and the navigation of the Mississippi was again gone over. Jenifer's opponent's discoursed on the sacred sanction of the charters, and declared the necessity of conserving the rights of the states if unity and prosperity were to be attained. They spoke of the generosity and fairness of the king of France in contrast to the ambition of Spain and her evident intention of taking advantage of their distresses. One speaker claimed that "if Spain had the right to make the conquest of all that belonged to the king of Great Britain, His Catholic Majesty, by virtue of this principle, would form claims on Georgia and South Carolina which were then in the hands of the British." Others asserted that if they abandoned their fellow citi-

[17]Barbé de Marbois to Vergennes, October 10, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 88, new 14.)

[18]*Ibid.*

[19]*Ibid.* The published journals of Congress do not give this motion.

[20]The whole debate is described in Marbois to Vergennes. (*Ibid.*)

zens, Spanish rule would prove so oppressive that revolution would soon break out. Especial emphasis was also laid on the duty of Congress to protect the interests of the states that were then invaded, and it was heralded about that if the southern delegates assented to the cessions demanded "they would answer for it with their heads."[21] The arguments of Jenifer were feebly supported by the other members and the motion was finally lost.

On October 4 Congress unanimously[22] passed resolutions to adhere to its former instructions and two days later appointed a committee consisting of Madison, Sullivan, and Duane to draft a letter to Jay.[23] Of this committee Marbois judged Madison to be the most moderate, but he was bound by instructions and could not recede from the pretensions of his state.[24] He was willing, however, to talk over the question with the French envoy, who attempted in every way to get him to tone down the letter to Jay. Madison was conciliatory in his attitude towards France, but he remained firm on the policy approved in Congress.[25]

After the resolutions of October 4, there appears to have been only one advocate of concession in Congress, Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, who had for nearly two years been a most earnest supporter of the Spanish alliance and had throughout shown entire willingness to grant any sacrifice to obtain it. Before he had come to represent his state at Philadelphia he had, as president of the senate of Maryland, attracted the notice of Gerard and the two had become firm friends.[26] Upon entering Congress in November, 1778, he at once identified himself with the French party

[21] *E. U.*, XIV, no. 88, new 14.

[22] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVIII, 900. Marbois says that Congress passed this resolution by a plurality of six votes. *E. U.*, XIV, no. 88, fol. 14.

[23] Marbois to Montmorin, October 17. (*Esp.*, 601, no. 10, new 63.)

[24] Marbois to Vergenes, October 21. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 92, new 29.) To Montmorin. (*Esp.* 601, no. 11, new 71.)

[25] Marbois to Montmorin, October 17. (*Esp.*, 601, no. 10, new 63.)

[26] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Ford ed.), XII, 1141.

and soon became its most active and radical member. When the designs of Spain to get control of the West became noised about and it became apparent they received the support of the French minister, many of the old adherents of Gerard, men like Jay and Gouverneur Morris, determined upon an independent course. Not so with Jenifer. He became an ardent enthusiast for any concession that would help to gain Spanish assistance or would please the king of France. His views do not appear to have been regarded as unpatriotic by his constituents at home or his colleagues in Congress. He became the center of opposition to the combination of Samuel Adams and the Lees to push New England interests in Canada and Virginian ambitions in the Mississippi valley. He was the first representative of the small states party and drew to his side all factions jealous of the dominance of the "Junto."

Maryland had no interest in a colonial policy and dreaded the dominance of her southern neighbor. The navigation of the Mississippi and the control of its valley meant no increase in her resources but only an added expense to conquer them. Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey were likewise circumscribed in their limits and never displayed much enthusiasm for acquisitions to the territory of their sister states. At the behest of Gerard, Jenifer had led the fight against the demands of Congress for the right to navigate the Mississippi as expressed in Jay's first instructions. In the winter of 1779-80 when Luzerne and Miralles were urging acquiescence in Spain's pretentions to the ownership of Eastern Louisiana, Jenifer had been their spokesman and had continued the advocate of Spain during the second struggle over the policy of Congress towards the West.

Not at all daunted by his defeat in the resolutions of October 4, Jenifer planned with Marbois[27] to renew the fight when the committee should report its draft of the letter to Jay.[28] They sought to influence the members of Con-

[27]Luzerne had left Philadelphia on his vacation.

[28]Marbois to Vergennes, October 10. (*E. U.*, XVI, no. 88, new 14.)

gress both by private conferences and by arguments delivered before the whole assembly. They were still handicapped, however, by their inability to speak authoritatively on the position of Spain. The secretary of Miralles had been left as chargé d'affaires in Philadelphia and he had only a vague notion of the desires of his court.[29] He was frightened, however, at the stand of Congress and begged Marbois to exert his influence in behalf of more moderate measures. With different members of Congress different arguments were employed. To the more radical there was pointed out the need of an alliance with Spain and the danger of displeasing her if the claims of Congress were based on pretensions of right. To them it was urged that the United States should throw themselves on the magnanimity and generosity of the Catholic king.[30] To those who were very friendly to the French king and yet suspicious of Spanish ambitions, Marbois urged concession because it would please His Majesty, and this argument he thought, had a powerful effect. Throughout the whole war there were frequent expressions of gratitude for French aid; and on these the French representatives, tho often disappointed, depended for substantial acts of gratitude. In this case however, Marbois received more than ordinary encouragement and felt confident of success. Samuel Huntington himself, the president of Congress and a New Englander, expressed alarm at the prospect of incurring the enmity of Spain and promised to urge moderation in the new instructions to Jay.[31]

At the solicitation of Marbois and with his help Jenifer undertook to prepare a memoir which should set forth the pretensions of Spain in the most favorable light and answer all the arguments of the opposition.[32] The result of his labors is the clearest and most convincing exposition of

[29] Marbois to Vergennes, October 17, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 91, new 23.) Marbois to Montmorin, October 17, 1780. (*Esp.*, 601 no. 10, new 63.)

[30] *Ibid.*

[31] *Ibid.*

[32] *Ibid.*

Spain's position that appeared during the revolution.[33] He goes over all the old questions of the validity of the charters, the treaty of 1763, the necessity of a well-defined frontier, such as the Mississippi, and all the legal and diplomatic questions involved. In this document the Maryland delegate argued that those interested in the question ought to have no voice in the decision; but no state would consent to remain defenseless while its claims were set aside. The most powerful point of his argument, however, was for concessions to win the alliance of Spain.[34]

His legal analysis, keen tho it was, could have little effect on a body of revolutionists who held it their duty to obey the wishes of their constituents. Alliance with Spain, however, had become a vital question. Gates had been ignominiously defeated in South Carolina[35] and the interior of the whole region as well as the cities along the coast were in the possession of the British.[36] The patriot party in the South was broken up and such of its leaders as were alive and free had fled to the north. It was the time of greatest discouragement for the American cause. The American army was unpaid and unprovided for and the French king had refused to grant another subsidy or to send more troops and the French navy had for a long time rendered no service.[37] In the midst of this general distress, news of Arnold's treason added to the all-pervading spirit of gloom.[38]

It was a fitting time to urge any concession to secure the help of Spain, and Jenifer made the most of his opportunity. In contrast to the reverses of the Continental army, Spanish troops were victorious on the Mississipi; and it was believed they would soon overrun the whole ter-

[33]The title of this memoir was "Observations on the points contested in the present negotiations between Spain and the United States." Copies were enclosed to Vergennes and Montmorin with the dispatches of October 17.

[34]*E. U.*, XIV, no. 91, new 25.

[35]*"Observations" etc.* with dispatch of October 17, (*Ibid.*)

[36]*Ibid.* Van Tyne, *American Revolution*, 301.

[37]Marbois to Vergennes. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 91, new 23.)

[38]Van Tyne, *American Revolution*, 306.

ritory in dispute. Why not then, he argued, make a virtue of necessity and in return for the Spanish alliance grant that which we can never hope to conquer?[39] With the help of Spain he held that success was assured; without it failure was inevitable. Under the existing conditions he believed that the war carried on by Spain was more harmful than helpful to the American cause, for Spanish demands were a drain on the resources provided for by France. With the Spanish troops to attack from the south and the Americans from the north, he argued the British would be between two fires and would soon be driven out of the country.[40]

How are we to secure this needed assistance? he asked. There was only one way possible: to grant the Catholic King Eastern Louisiana and the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi. In this opinion he was backed up by the powerful influence of the French embassy and he felt that Congress must agree to make the concession.[41]

The opposition to surrendering American interests in the West, strangely enough, was led by New England, while the southern states were rather inclined to give up their claims. The eastern delegates argued that since Jay was on the ground his opinion should be followed and they were for remaining firm. Marbois, however, thought there were other reasons for their stand. The eastern states had never been amenable to French influence and had been the hot-bed of the anti-Gallican party. Their attitude had often before been attributed to hostility to the French alliance, and Marbois thought that this hostility was more bitter in its opposition to Spain. In these states the British power was considered broken and he believed that their leaders wished to continue the war in order to conquer Canada and Nova Scotia.[42] Still another reason, he suggested, might be

[39] Van Tyne, *American Revolution*, 306.

[40] "Observations" etc., with dispatch of October 17. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 91, new 26.)

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] *Ibid.*

that they feared, if the ultimatum on the western boundaries was set aside, the southern states would desert them on the issue of the northern limits.

The attitude of the middle states was more moderate. New York held strongly for the former instructions on the western boundary but was willing to surrender the navigation of the Mississippi. Marbois believed that she hoped, if the right to use this river were prohibited, her citizens could then control the western trade by the way of the Lakes and the Hudson. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland appeared for the most part indifferent to the West and strongly anxious for the favor of the King of France and the alliance with Spain. Marbois thought that when the question came up for final decision they would all vote in favor of his projects.[43] Virginia, led by Madison, was inflexibly opposed to any concession. The delegates from the three southern states expressed to Marbois their opinion that Spain should be conciliated, but declared they must not vote to make any sacrifices of the rights of their states.[44]

On October 17 the committee submitted its draft of a letter to Jay explaining the "reasons and principles" on which the resolutions of the 4th were founded.[45] This letter was prepared by Madison[46] and is in his handwriting.[47] It presents a masterly defense of the principles agreed upon two weeks before and answers in detail the memoir of Jenifer with a breadth of view never attained by the member from Maryland. It states simply and concisely the position of Congress, and then passes to a discussion of the

[43] *E. U.*, XIV, no. 91, new 26.

[44] *Ibid.*

[45] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVIII, 935.

[46] "Mr. Madison, charged by his colleagues to show in memoir the state of the question of the navigation of the Mississippi and the possession of the lands situated on the left bank of that river, has communicated to me this writing . . . . " Marbois to Vergennes, October 21, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 92, new 29); to Montmorin (*Esp.*, 601, no. 11, new 71).

[47] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVIII, 947.

questions involved. In his contention for the Mississippi as the western boundary Madison ignores the obsolete delimitations of the charters and bases his arguments on the cession by the treaty of 1763. "It is sufficient that by the definition of the treaty of Paris, of 1763, article seventh, all the territory now claimed by the United States was expressly and irrevocally ceded to the king of Great Britain, and that the United States are, in consequence of the revolution in their government, entitled to the benefits of that cession."[48] The sovereignty of this territory, he contended, was vested in the king of Great Britain by virtue of his position as king of the people of America. Consequently, when this sovereignty over the thirteen states was overthrown, it returned to the people. "From these principles," he asserted, "it results that all the territory lying within the limits of the states, as fixed by the sovereign himself, was held by him, for their particular benefits, and must equally with his other rights, and claims in quality of their sovereign, be considered as having devolved on them, in consequence of their resumption of the sovereignty to themselves." In answer to the Spanish claim of right of conquest, Madison replied that these conquests did not extend farther north than Fort Natchez, while the remainder of the territory had been conquered and was held by American arms. He furthermore insisted that the United States, as an idependent nation, could not permit another power to conquer territory contained within its limits.[49] He defended the rights of the United States to this territory on the grounds of a national boundary and its settlement by American citizens. The right to navigate the Mississippi river Madison based on arguments the same as those advanced for the possession of the western territories, and the right of passage through the Spanish possessions he supported by appeal to the law of nations.[50] The document as a whole shows much learning and

[48] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XVIII, 936.
[49] *Ibid.*, XVIII, 938.
[50] *Ibid.*, 945.

a thoro understanding of the principles of international law. It is clear in exposition and expresses the most subtle ideas in a simple and concise manner. In spite of the fact that Marbois considered the pretensions of the United States as set forth in this document as too ambitious,[51] the letter was accepted by Congress, with the belief that it would convince Spain of the justice of the American position.[52]

According to Marbois, however, Jay was left much discretion as to insistence on the resolutions of Congress. He was not to present them as an ultimatum, and was authorized to retract as circumstances and prudence suggested.

Altho the French representatives did not approve the stand of Congress, they recognized a spirit of moderation that promised a reasonable settlement. Marbois wrote that, if Spain acceded to the conditions laid down by Congress, her action would cause general satisfaction in America. He was not, however, sanguine of such a concession, and sought to prepare Congress for harder terms. He was handicapped in his efforts by ignorance of the full extent of Florida Blanca's demands[53] and felt constrained to inform Congress of his lack of definite knowledge.

The decision of Congress in these instructions to Jay marks the end of the personal diplomacy of the French ministers. Upon the gratitude of Congress and personal counsel to individual members of Congress Gerard and Luzerne had built up a powerful machine in the interests of the Spanish ambition. One by one the members of this organization had fallen away, and after the debate of October several months elapse before Jenifer's name appears in the

[51] Marbois to Vergennes, October 21. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 92, new 29.)

[52] "The president of Congress has said that he believes an impartial power will find the new instructions satisfactory for the court of Madrid." *Ibid.*

[53] He believed, however, that Spain "had demanded of Congress at this moment that part of Louisiana which in the atlas of Damible is comprised between the Mississippi on the west, the Floridas on the south, the river Athbamnus or Appalachicola on the east, and a line drawn from the sources of these rivers to the mouth of the Ohio in the Mississippi." *Ibid.*

votes of Congress.[54] With his departure the last partisan of the old French party disappears and the diplomacy at Philadelphia begins to assume the character of international relations.

This effort of Luzerne and Marbois also marks their last attempt at active intervention in behalf of Spain. Gardoqui, the successor of Miralles, had arrived and he neither gave information to the French representatives nor sought their confidence. Henceforth there is no intimation that French and Spaniard are hand and glove and Gardoqui is left free to pursue his aims. Another reason for this withdrawal from the Spanish affairs may be found in the instructions of Vergennes. He had previously declared his ignorance of American rights in the West and his fears of incurring the distrust of the United States;[55] and in consequence, he now directed his representative to cease interfering and to urge nothing against the will of Congress.

Thus by the close of 1780 the United States had received recognition in spirit as previously in fact and was no longer a mere protegé of the French monarchy. It was acknowledged that Congress could judge of its own rights and interests and was not to be dominated by notions of sentiment. Spain must seek her ends through the channels of ordinary diplomacy and the United States were henceforth permitted to work out their own destiny.

[54]He is not recorded as voting until April, 1781.

[55]See above, p. 170, note 54.

# CHAPTER X

## THE CLOSE OF THE WAR

Congress proceeded to the exercise of its new found freedom with moderation. Marbois had expressed the belief that the shifting membership of this body would sooner or later cause a change in its policy;[1] and within a few months this opinion was apparently justified. In October Congress had unanimously agreed to resolutions demanding widely extended boundaries, but these resolutions did not express the ideas of all the members, and many of them assured Marbois that they would be satisfied with narrower limits, but that it was necessary to present a united front.

There were many considerations, however, that pointed to the necessity of concession. Cornwallis now held Georgia and South Carolina and had advanced northward far enough to proclaim North Carolina a conquered province;[2] and it appeared that without more effective aid these three states would be lost to the union. In the north Washington was inactive, and no additional help was then expected from the French. Still another danger menaced the republic; the danger that Spain would make a separate peace with Great Britain; and early in 1781 came a letter from Jay which aroused still greater doubts as to Spanish designs. Jay had learned of Spain's negotiations with a British agent, and of her disavowal of any purpose to treat independently;[3] but the agent still remained. "If they have rejected all overtures of Britain,

[1]Marbois to Vergennes, October 1, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 92, new 29.)

[2]Van Tyne, *American Revolution*, 324.

[3]See p. 143.

why is Mr. Cumberland still here," asked Jay;[4] and his suspicions found an immediate echo in Congress.

The Americans had abandoned their claim to any territory by charter right, and now realized that their pretensions, in order to be effective, must be maintained on other grounds. They understood at last that when they came to treat for peace the enemy would surrender territory in their possession only for adequate compensation. This truth had been urged by Vergennes; and he had insisted that the first aim should be to expel the enemy from their borders,[5] but nothing had been accomplished. Now with the British in possession of the southern states and the Spaniards active along the Mississippi, Congress resolved to retrieve itself and proposed two plans of action: an effective military campaign, and renewed efforts to obtain help from the Court of Madrid. Washington was entrusted with the military plans and prepared for energetic measures. Once more he turned his eyes towards Canada and succeeded in convincing the reluctant Luzerne of the advisability of its conquest.[6] Luzerne admitted the desire of his court to free the French in Canada as it had freed the Anglo-Saxon colonies, and declared its eagerness to attempt any measures for the humiliation of Britain; he also wrote to Vergennes that he thought the invasion would be "practical and of great utility."[7] Vergennes lent a favorable ear but urged that the British should first be expelled from the United States. After this should be accomplished, he declared his willingness to

[4]November 6, 1780. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 148.) Cumberland was the name of the British agent.

[5]See p. 191, note 9.

[6]Luzerne to Vergennes, November 3, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 49, new 213.)

[7]Au defâut du Siège de New York, qui paroit devoir être au dessus de nos moyens au moins pour la plus grande partie de la Campagne, une expedition contre le Canada Sera la plus agreable aux Etats de la nouvelle Angleterre, et je crois qu'elle est a la fois practicable et d'une utilité infinée." Luzerne to Vergennes, April 29, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVI, no. 62, new 137.)

support the expedition, for he regarded it as necessary for Halifax and Penobscot at least to belong "either to us or to the Americans."[8] The project was continually discussed in Congress[9] but military events forbade its undertaking. The advance of Cornwallis to the north threatened the central states, and thus ended the last attempt against Canada.

In the Mississippi Valley, American power was equally precarious, altho in the regions of Kentucky and Tennessee settlers from the states had occupied the land and it seemed that possession there was secure. The expedition of Clark had given the Americans a claim to a large part of the territory north of the Ohio; but the British still held posts on the Lake Shore, such as Niagara, Detroit, and Mackinac, and these commanded an extensive region. Washington felt that it was essential to reduce these posts, but he did not have the necessary military strength to do so alone, and suggested that Virginia should furnish additional aid.[10]

The Spaniards in this region had aroused the fears of the Americans. Their designs on Eastern Louisiana were well known, and their expeditions along the Mis-

[8]Vergennes to Luzerne, October 22, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 32.)

[9]This measure was chiefly fostered by the New England delegates who insisted that their states would never be secure as long as Great Britain held Canada. Luzerne to Vergennes, April 29. (*E. U.*, XVI, no. 62, fol 137.) "Le penchant des delegations du Nord pour une expedition contre le Canada se manifeste de plus en plus et M Samuel Adams qui vient de partir pour l'Etat de Massachussett est toujours plein de cette idée. Les Délégués du Sud qui sentent combien il importe de ne donner lieu a aucune division en Congrès sur la matiere importante.... ont crû devoir se montrer faciles sur les pretentions de leurs Colleagues .... mais ils ont mêmes tems annoncé qu'ils s'opposeroient de tout leur pouvoir a toute operation contre Quebec ou les autres parties Septentrionales du Canada aussi longtems qu'une parti des Treize Etats seroit invadie...." May 12, 1781. (*Ibid.*, no. 75, new 139.)

[10]Washington to Jefferson, December 28, 1780. (*Writings* (Ford ed.), IX, 81.)

sissippi were of an alarming character.[11] Galvez had early captured the British posts on the lower Mississippi without protest; but when in 1781 the Spanish commander at St. Louis sent an expedition across the Illinois country which captured St. Joseph, there was a cry of alarm among patriotic Americans.[12] It is probable that Spain did not have any designs on the territory north of the Ohio, but her intrigues to obtain that south of this river convinced many that she was trying to get possesion of the whole Mississippi valley.

In harmony with Washington's ideas, and possibly at his suggestion, two expeditions were planned against the Northwest. One was to be composed of French "habitants" along the Mississippi, under the leadership of La Balme; the other was to be made up of troops from Virgina and Kentucky commanded by Colonel Clark.[13] La

[11]Geo. Rogers Clark wrote to John Todd in March, 1780: "I am not clear but that the Spaniards would fondly suffer their settlements in the Illinois to fall with ours for the sake of having the opportunity of retaking both." (*John Todd Papers: Chicago Historical Society Collections,* IV, 326.)

[12]See E. G. Mason, "March of the Spaniards across Illinois." (*Magazine of American History,* XV, 457.) This account merely reflects the contemporary American fears without any real knowledge of facts. Franklin was very much alarmed at the Spanish project, fearing it was an attempt to restrict the republic to the Appalachian mountains. (Franklin to Livingston, April 12, 1782. *Writings,* Smyth ed., VIII, 425.) Jay wrote to Congress on March 12, that the Madrid Gazette after describing the expedition speaks of its importance as preventing the English from attacking St. Louis and compelling the Indians to remain neutral in the war. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.* V, 364.) Luzerne did not know what motive the Spaniards had in undertaking this conquest. He described it as of little use and very hard to defend. He describes fully the alarm felt among the Americans. Luzerne to Vergennes, August 9, 1782. (*E. U.,* XXII, no. 8, new 24.)

[13]La Balme was a French cavalry officer who was one of the many sent over by Deane in the winter of 1776-7. Deane to Congress, October 17, 1776. (Sparks, *Dip. Cor.,* I, 42.) He was granted a passport by Vergennes and took the quality of a merchant. Lenoir to Vergennes, January 28, 1779. (*E. U.,* II, no. 32, new 54.) In granting the passport Vergennes wrote: "Le gouvernment ne pouvant avouer leur que veulent aller tenter fortune dans cette partie de l'Amèrique ne peut absolument donner un titre qui con-

Balme was the first to start. He aroused the French settlers at Kaskaskia, and with a small force started towards Detroit.[14] Before they could reach their destination

stiterois quil a connoissance de leur projet. Vergennes to Lenoir, January 29, 1777. (*E. U.*, II, no. 33, new 55.) In May Congress conferred upon La Balme the title of Lieutenant colonel of horse (*Journals of Continental Congress,* (Ford ed.) VII, 385) and in July he was made inspector general. (*Ibid.*, 539.) In October he resigned (*ibid.*, IX, 797), and spent several months in trying to get his pay adjusted. Just how La Balme got back into the American service is not clear, for in February 1778, the committee on foreign applications informed him that it would have no further use for his services. (*Ibid.*, X, 157.) We next find mention of him in the West "provided with a commission of inspector general of all the cavalry in America and with a letter of recommendation dated June 25, 1780, addressed to the suppliants by Mr. Fowler who was formerly our commandant...." Petition to governor of Virginia by inhabitants of Kaskaskia, May 4, 1781. (*Kaskaskia Records,* 237.) His activities here aroused suspicions among the Americans that he was in the employ of France (*ibid,* 169), but he began his work at Kaskaskia. There he found the Kaskaskians full of hatred towards the "Virginians," who, they claimed, had despoiled and were oppressing them. La Balme skilfully appealed to their patriotism as Frenchmen, and promised them redress from Congress. (*Ibid.*, 181.) He sympathized with them, but since they were subjects of the United States he did not feel at liberty to make a formal request in their behalf and contented himself with speaking privately to various members of Congress. La Balme raised a force of Frenchmen which started against the fort at Detroit but was ambushed and slain. Luzerne to Vergennes, May 12, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVI, no. 75, new 139.) La Balme's expedition was of no importance in itself; it derives an interest from the fact that there was then and has been since some suspicion that he was acting to further some ambitious plans of France. (Turner, in *American Historical Review,* X, 235.) There seems to be no evidence for this assumption, and there is much to urge against it. In the French archives there is no mention of La Balme except the perfunctory one of granting him passports. Luzerne apparently did not know him, for he spoke of him in a disinterested sort of way and did not even make mention of his death. Most important of all is the fact that Vergennes did not have any designs on the Mississippi Valley.

[14] "Une colonie de François etablié sur les bords du Mississippi dans le Pays des Illinois au poste des Kaskaskias a crû recemment pouvoir tenter une enterprise contre les Fort du detroit et sous la conduite de M La Balme: Ils ont remonté L'oubache et se sont emparés du poste des Miamis." Luzerne to Vergennes, May 12, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVI, no. 75, new 139.)

they were ambushed and La Balme and most of his little band were slain.

Clark was instructed to collect a force at Fort Pitt and to make ready for an attack on Detroit. He was then to march east and capture Niagara and after that to join with other forces in an effort to capture Quebec.[15] He was slow in raising his troops, however, and before he could start events were hurrying the war to a close and the expedition never set out.

Luzerne heartily approved of the attempt of Congress to get possession of the Northwest. He called the measure a piece of "sound politics" for "if it succeeds," he wrote, "it will assure the frontiers of the thirteen states to the north." He recognized that the possession of the Great Lakes would place the Americans in a much better position to negotiate with great Britain.[16] The failure to conquer these posts resulted as Luzerne had foreseen; and with the British in possession of them they long remained a fruitful cause of trouble.

The desperate condition of American affairs in the last months of the war inclined Congress once more to seek Spanish aid, and some of the southern delegates confided to Luzerne their intention to reopen negotiations regarding the West.[17] They had decided to offer Spain in return for her help "one hundred miles of land on the left bank of

[15]Plan for an attack on Quebec. (*Papers of the Continental Congress*, 25, I, fol. 37.)

[16]....une expedition contre les Forts de Niagara et du detroit a été secrétement resolué. Elle doit être enterprise par le Colonel Clarke avec quelques forces quil tierara de la Virginie et avec les milices du district de Kentucke. Si elle reussit elle assurera la frontiere des Treize Etats au Nord Elles les rendra maitres de deux postes importantes et des lacs michigan, huron, Erie et Ontario qui sont dans l'etendüe des limités quils se sont Fixés et cette possession leur donnera les moiens de Negocier sur un pied beaucoup plus avantageux avec la grande Bretagne." Luzerne then describes the difficulties in the way which were great enough to make him doubt of the success of the expedition. Luzerne to Vergennes, May 12, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVI, no. 75, new 139.)

[17]Luzerne to Vergennes, November 26, 1780. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 89, fol. 337.)

the river" [Mississippi].[18] On this question there was the same old alignment of parties; the New England states and Virginia opposing any concession, while a majority of the other delegates favored it. After much discussion a compromise resolution was passed, which authorized Jay to give up the claims of the United States to navigate the Mississippi below the thirty-first parallel, provided that the right of navigation above this line was recognized.[19] No concession of territory in the Mississippi Valley was made, and it was apparent that Virginia and New England would concede no more.[20] Congress felt that these terms were most liberal and did not doubt that Spain would accept them.[21] Luzerne himself believed that now Spain would accede to the treaty of alliance, if she were given control of the mouth of the Mississippi, and he ceased urging concessions upon Congress.[22]

The resolutions of Congress agreeing to relinquish the navigation of the Mississippi gave new life to the negotiations at Madrid. In January Florida Blanca had demanded this as the *sine qua non* of forming an alliance with the United States; but Jay had not felt at liberty to grant it and Franklin had approved his stand.[23] In all his efforts Jay had been counseled by Montmorin, and after the ultimatum of Florida Blanca both agreed that

[18]Luzerne to Vergennes, December 15. (*E. U.*, XIV, no. 108, new 120.)

[19]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 257; *Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XIX, 153.

[20]Luzerne thought there was a deal by which the northern states were to support Virginia's pretentions to the West in return for that state's support of the New England claim to an extended northern boundary. (*Esp.*, 601, no. 191.)

[21]Congress to Jay, May 28, 1781. *Journals of Continental Congress*, XX, 555. A resolution to allow greater concessions was unanimously defeated on August 10. *Secret Journals*, II, 468.

[22]Luzerne to Montmorin, May 1, 1781. (*Esp.*, 603, no. 61.)

[23]Franklin to Jay, January 27, 1781. (*Writings* (Smyth ed.), VIII, 202.)

nothing more could be done before the general settlement of peace.[24]

When Jay received instructions allowing him to relinquish the navigation of the Mississippi below the thirty-first parallel, he attempted to reopen the negotiations with the Spanish minister. He did not reveal his instructions at once, altho he strongly suspected that the Spanish minister knew all about them. He was still opposed to the cession of the right of navigation and resolved to make one more effort to conserve it. After all, he reasoned, Spain will fight as well in our cause without a treaty as with one To Florida Blanca he declared that "Congress views the speedy accomplishment of this union as very important to the common cause; and therefore, if Spain would consent forthwith to come into it, in that case they would gratify His Majesty by ceding to him the navigation of the Mississippi below their territories on reasonable terms." Florida Blanca showed no inclination to agree to these conditions, and argued that the whole question could better be adjusted in a general peace.[25]

Jay then went to Montmorin, who advised him to continue his efforts, and declared that the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi ought to satisfy Spain.[26] Jay acted on the suggestion, but to all his communications Florida Blanca returned no answer. He excused himself on the plea of illness and finally asked Jay to submit in definite terms the demands of Congress in regard to the Mississippi and the boundaries. Jay then sent a project of a treaty of alliance which followed exactly the conditions laid down by Congress in regard to both questions. He dwelt at length on the sacrifices which the loss of the navigation of the Mississippi would entail on the inhabitants of the West, and begged that the generosity of the king would give them

[24]Jay to Congress, October 3, 1781. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 739.) Luzerne wrote to Vergennes that Jay counted little on the success of his attempts to treat with Spain before the peace. July 6. (*Esp.*, 604, no. 21, new 44.)

[25]Jay to Congress. Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 738-747.

[26]Montmorin to Vergennes, July 6. (*Esp.*, 604, no. 21.)

some relief.[27] This was practically the end of the negotiation with Spain on the question of an alliance and the disputes over the Mississippi, for the Spanish minister never could find time to discuss the question until after Jay had departed from Spain.

To Montmorin Florida Blanca expressed the most hostile views towards the United States. He dwelt much on the perfidy of the Americans who, he declared, were still devoted to Great Britain. He reiterated his fears of aggression by the new nation, and gave this as the principal reason why he would not enter the alliance. He acknowledged that independence was assured, but hoped that the American republic would always remain feeble. He attempted to revive the old scheme of *uti possidetis* and planned to leave Great Britain in possession of New York, Charleston, and Chesapeake Bay. This he felt would keep the states in dependence on their allies.[28]

Montmorin opposed this view decidedly and firmly. He ridiculed the idea that a people who had fought as savagely as the Americans could bear any love for their old foe; and he declared that the policy of Spain would make them dependencies of the common foe and thus render fruitless the whole war. If Great Britain should keep these important posts, he argued, American independence will not be absolute, and American commerce will be a prey to the caprice of England. He pointed out that, if Spain wished the new nation to be weak, her wish was assured by the very constitution of the confederacy.[29] These arguments had no effect upon Florida Blanca and he remained obstinately set against the recognition of American independence.

[27]Jay to Congress, October 3, 1781. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, IV, 766 et seq.) A copy of this projected treaty is in the French foreign office. (*Esp.*, 604, no. 187.) Through some error Van Tyne asserts that "Jay never revealed these instructions." (*American Revolution*, 312.) Both Jay and Montmorin assert the contrary.

[28]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 12, 1781. (*Esp.*, 602, no. 18, new 310.)

[29]*Ibid.*

The failure of Jay's negotiations widened the breach between the United States and Spain. Spain had never desired an alliance and hated the Americans as rebels. She had aided them only out of hostility to Great Britain, but at the same time had tried to cripple them as a nation. Her offers of assistance had been only for the accomplishment of some of her own immediate ends, and had never looked towards independence. She assisted in the conquest of the Floridas, when they were to be for her own possession; but she insisted that they must include the whole Mississippi Valley. When Congress refused this exorbitant demand, Spain decided to seek the realization of her ambition in other ways, and henceforth treated the pretentions of the new republic with scornful indifference.

In Congress the failure of Jay's negotiations increased the feeling of hostility and distrust towards Spain. The measure surrendering the navigation of the Mississippi had been forced through with difficulty, and when Spain hesitated to accept the terms offered, the opposition increased.[30] When news reached Philadelphia of Jay's complete failure, many members of Congress demanded that all negotiations be broken off. They felt that they had conceded too much under the strain of adversity; and now that Yorktown had gone into history, they wished to take back this concession. Many schemes were suggested. One member advanced the idea of offering Russia an establishment in Eastern Louisiana as a check to Spanish aggression and a guarantee of peace in the West.[31] Congress contented itself, however, with a resolution introduced by Madison that "the limitation affixed by him [Jay] to the proposed surrender of the navigation of the Mississippi in particular corresponds

[30]Luzerne to Montmorin, September 1. (*Esp.*, 605, no. 119.)

[31]"Ce Ministre [Livingston] est porté à crôire aussi que le Congrès que cette puissance voit avec inquiètude l'elevation d'une République dont elle craint que le voisinage ne lui devienne dangereux . . . Parmi les idees deraisonnables que ces conjunctures ont fait . . . . Il n'en est point de plus bizarre que celle d'offrir a la Russie un etablissment dans la Louisiane orientale pour la rendre favorable aux Etats-Unis . . . . "Luzerne to Vergennes, May 10, 1782. (*E. U.*, XXI, 236, new 48.)

with the views of Congress; that they observe not without surprise and concern, that a proposition, so liberal in itself, and which removed the only avowed obstacle to a connection between the United States and his catholick majesty, should not have produced greater effect on the councils of the latter."[32] Congress further resolved that the concession was offered for the immediate aid of Spain and that every delay detracted from the reason for the sacrifice. It declared that no more liberal terms would be offered and with this the question of the navigation of the Mississippi passed out of the Revolution.

The jealousy and ill will of the Spanish court did not escape the knowledge of the watchful Vergennes. He had been irritated at its refusal to recognize the United States, and its grasping ambition had angered him. He had hoped for a more liberal policy but he was at last convinced of Spain's hostility to his American allies.[33] He believed that Florida Blanca would never accede to the alliance, and that the whole question would have to be threshed out at the time of the settlement of peace. By his advice all efforts to induce Spain to sign the treaty of alliance were discontinued; and for the remainder of the war Vergennes sought to obtain such harmony of action as the conditions would permit.

Vergennes realized that the difference between the two countries was fundamental and might lead to serious consequences. He had never brought up the question of the West in his communications with the Spanish court, but he knew from the reports of Luzerne the extent of its claims, and shrewdly surmised that these conflicting pretentions kept Florida Blanca from treating with Congress.

[32] *Secret Journals*, III, 99; Charles Thompson to Montmorin, May 24, 1782. (*Esp.*, 607, no. 99.)

[33] "Il y a longtems, Monsieur, que je suis convaincu que M le comte de Florida Blanche a des principes erronés a l'égard de 'l'Amerique qu'il est secretement contraire a l'independance les Etats-unis et qu'il nous causera autant qu'il sera en son pouvoir des embarras lorsqu'il sera question de traiter cette matiere vis-a-vis de la Grande Bretagne." Vergennes to Montmorin, April 12, 1781. (*Esp.*, 606, no. 159; Circourt, III, 320.)

His best hope of a successful issue was to keep all disputes under cover until the war was finished; and so he refused to commit himself on the question and enjoined his subordinates to do the same.[34]

The closing years of the war pressed no less heavily upon France than upon the United States. The French government had unflinchingly borne the expenses of many campaigns, but the strain was beginning to tell. Vergennes was not the first to complain. There were others at the court who felt that France had already gone beyond her strength. In September, 1780, Maurepas informed the king that the finances were in such a state that peace was imperative. Vergennes even then did not withdraw from his position but forced his leading opponents out of office. This did not relieve the finances, however, and Vergennes himself was compelled to take measures looking towards peace.

Vergennes found his chief difficulty in satisfying the demands of Spain. He had promised her Minorca, Jamaica, and Gibraltar; but only the first had fallen and the others seemed impregnable.[35] It appeared likely that Spain could not get the territories she wanted, and now she was clamoring for indemnity in other regions. Florida Blanca felt that his country could get more by a settlement on the basis of *uti possidetis*,[36] which would give her Minorca and the Floridas with some minor concessions, and which would leave New York and the three southern states in the hands of the British. Under these terms also Spain might have claimed Eastern Louisiana, for she maintained that it had been conquered by Galvez; and the Northwest would have remained in British hands.

Military reverses, financial difficulties, and the demands of Spain were all sources of anxiety to the French minister. He knew that France could not much longer continue the struggle, but he felt that the royal honor demanded independence for all the states. He refused to dis-

[34]Vergennes thus instructed Luzerne, August 12, 1781 (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 17, new 38); to Montmorin (*Esp.*, 603, no. 25).

[35]Lecky, *American Revolution* (Woodburn ed.), 428.

[36]Doniol, *Histoire*, IV, 498.

cuss the proposition of *uti possidetis,* and insisted that France would stand by her alliance with the Americans.[37] At the same time he realized that unless the allied forces should achieve a striking success it would be impossible to force the British to surrender their recent conquests; and so he instructed Luzerne to "familiarize" Congress with the idea that some sacrifice might be necessary. Vergennes, however, was resolved to maintain the principles of his alliance with the United States above all other conditions.[38]

In order to maintain the principles of the alliance, Vergennes resolved on aggressive military action, and urged Spain to attack East Florida and Jamaica. The Florida campaign he planned as a help to the Americans.[39] He strengthened the forces around Gibraltar and projected another invasion of Canada. He sent De Grasse back to American waters and prepared for a strong campaign. This, he felt, must be his last effort; and, if he failed, he must yield to British terms; but, if he triumphed, the alliance would be maintained in all its provisions. The attack on Jamaica was not made; Gibraltar did not fall; but Yorktown solved the problem, and Vergennes declared that the independence of the whole of the United States was assured.[40]

The question of the boundaries presented to Vergennes a most serious dilemma. On the north there was little difficulty. He did not feel that the Americans could claim all Canada but he was anxious for them to have Halifax[41]

[37]Vergennes declared that the propositions of Spain would be advantageous to France on account of the conquests she had made, but he maintained that it did not enter into his plan of settling the future of America. To Luzerne, September 7, 1781. (*E. U.,* XVIII, no. 69.)

[38]"Le Roi tient a Ses obligations par principe comme par sentiment, et que son propre intêret leur est garant de la fidelité avec la quelle il est resolu de les remplir, mais vous aurez soin en même tems de les familiariser insensiblement avec les hypotesis qui en se realizant rendroient un Sacrifice quelconque indispensable. . . . " Vergennes to Luzerne, June 30, 1781. (*E. U.,* XVII, no. 19, new 55.)

[39]Vergennes to Montmorin, September 6, 1781. (*Esp.,* 605, no. 129.)

[40]Vergennes to Luzerne, July 27, 1781. (*E. U.,* XVII, no. 142.)

[41]Vergennes to Luzerne, October 22, 1780. (*Ibid.,* XIV, no. 32.)

to avoid the danger of British aggression. The boundaries between the United States and the Spanish possessions were the source of greatest difficulty, and, as to the justice of the case, Vergennes professed himself totally ignorant.[42] The only indications that he gave of his sympathies are his bitter protests against Spanish cupidity, and his praise of the moderation of Congress.[43]

Thus it was that the opposing claims of Congress and the Spanish court entangled Vergennes into a policy that appeared weak and vacillating, and has led to the charge of insincerity. Yet there is no evidence that he made a promise he did not try his best to keep, or that he gave countenance to measures he was unwilling to support; and throughout he showed a willingness, unusual in statesmen of any time, to sacrifice French claims to the cupidity of his allies. In no sense was he responsible for the breach between Spain and the United States. While he made many concessions to the court of Charles III, he promised nothing that interfered with any claim which Congress had set up. He guaranteed to the United States independence and such conquests as they might make and this guarantee he faithfully maintained. The question of the West and the Mississippi did not come within his purview until forced upon him by outside events, and he did not profess to know on which side justice lay. He tried to reconcile contending views and to harmonize differences until the close of the war when the question could be settled on its merits; and it was in this spirit that Vergennes entered upon the negotiations for peace.

[42]" . . . . nous pouvons juger . . . . que selon toutes aparances les deux parties auront bien peine a s'accorder sur le partage des territoires qui sont a l'Est du Mississipi et du l'Ohio. Nous garderons le silence le plus absolue jusqu' a ce que nous soyons invités a prendre connoissance de la discussion et a en dire notre sentiment; vous voudrez bien . . . . a en faire autant de votre cote." Vergennes to Luzerne, August 12, 1782. (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 38, new 55.) He had previously refused to discuss the subject because it was not "sufficiently clear." Vergennes to Luzerne, September 7, 1781. (*Ibid.*, XVIII, no. 69.)

[43]Vergennes to Montmorin, April 12, 1781. (*Esp.*, 603, no. 25.) To Luzerne, September 17, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVIII, no. 69.)

# CHAPTER XI

## VERGENNES AND THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR PEACE

The close of the war did not bring any compromise between the claims of Spain and those of the United States, nor did it enlighten Vergennes on the rights of either country. He had succeeded in postponing the question until all were ready to treat for peace, but with the assurance of pacification the rancor and obstinacy of the opposing forces became more insistent. Congress, united by the land cessions of the larger states into a common interest,[1] and relieved of the dangers and anxieties of invasion, at once returned to its former pretensions. Spain, foiled in her assaults on Gibraltar, and maddened by her misfortunes in the West Indies, clamored for compensation on the Mississippi.

Congress was the first to act. During the preceding years its pretensions had varied with its membership from a claim to all British America down to a proposal to accept merely the Atlantic seaboard. When it appeared that the war would soon be over, Congress adopted the suggestion

[1]The struggle between the landless states and the landed ones had been bitter. Virginia had claimed not only Kentucky but the country north of the Ohio, and the small states which had no hopes of conquest complained bitterly against carrying on a war for her aggrandizement. This had been the stay of the French party in Congress. Luzerne to Vergennes, January 4, 1781. (*E. U.*, XV, no. 8, new 112.) Tom Paine wrote a pamphlet in his most caustic style assailing the pretentions of the large states and especially those of Virginia. (Copy with above despatch.) As a result of the opposition of the smaller states, some of the states claiming lands in the West agreed to abandon their claims and allow the lands to be sold for the benefit of the soldiers. These cessions gave a new strength to the confederacy by stopping petty jealousies and hatreds, and by giving a common interest in this vast domain. It probably had much to do with the collapse of the French party.

of Luzerne and began to formulate once more its claims for the consideration of the negotiators.[2] Vergennes was insistent that the views of Congress be drawn clearly and precisely; and to accomplish this a committee was appointed to draw up instructions for the American envoys.[3] It was agreed without difficulty that the treaty of alliance with France should be the basis of the demands of Congress; but in addition it was necessary to determine the boundaries.[4]

On June 6 the committee presented its report and the debates on the boundaries to be claimed by Congress were renewed and continued for more than a week. On the 15th it was agreed to instruct the envoys that "As to the disputed boundaries . . . we refer you to the instructions formerly given Mr. Adams, dated 14th August, 1779." This was to serve only to explain the views and hopes of Congress; but as the instructions declared, "we think it unsafe to tie you by absolute and peremptory instructions." The envoys were to "make the most candid and confidential communications upon all subjects to the ministers of our generous ally, the king of France; to undertake nothing in the negotiations for peace . . . without their knowledge and concurrence, and ultimately to govern yourselves by their advice and opinion . . ."[5]

The provisions regarding the boundaries were not agreed to without much debate and discussion; but there seems to have been no opposition to the clause requiring the commissioners to act only with the knowledge and concurrence of the king. Throughout the war Congress had explained all its intentions to the French minister. Altho

[2]Luzerne to Congress, May 26, 1781. (*Journals of Continental Congress,* Hunt ed., XX, 561.)

[3]"Vous voudrez bien en attendant presser cette assemblée d'adresser à Sou plenipre des instructions claires et precisses, afin que les matieres puissant être preparés d'avantage avec luy et que lorsque les negociateurs seront entamées serieusement." Vergennes to Luzerne, July 27, 1781. (*E. U.,* XVII, no. 20, new 142.)

[4]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XX, 616.

[5]*Ibid.,* 606, 617.

he had often frankly opposed them, he had never betrayed the confidence reposed in him. There was no reason to think that France was unfriendly to the interests of the United States, and no reason why this confidence should not continue. Luzerne had definitely stated that the king would insist upon independence for all the United States, and would not treat on the basis of *uti possidetis*.[6] France had also advanced large sums of money and had given promise of further aid.

On the question of the boundaries, however, there was a wide diversity of opinion. Some wished to demand widely extended frontiers with permission to the negotiators to yield as it became necessary, or to leave the settlement of the question until after the peace.[7] Luzerne opposed any extreme demands and reminded Congress how absurd it was to insist upon conquests with the enemy in possession of much of their own territory. The old arguments were gone over without result,[8] and finally Luzerne suggested to the committee that "some discretion be left the envoys." Another suggestion was a line of demarkation between the United States and the British possessions, and this Luzerne approved, but the committee refused to present it to Congress.[9] This discussion brought out the ideas which Luzerne held regarding the boundaries of the United States. Vergennes had expressed the wish that Congress should not set up "indefensible pretensions," but he had declared that he would not dictate.[10] Luzerne interpreted this to mean

[6] *Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XX, 677.

[7] *Ibid.*, 608-609. Luzerne to Vergennes. (*E. U.*, XVII, no. 17, new 145.)

[8] See p. 175 et seq. The question of the charters and the proclamation was again gone over. See Luzerne to Vergennes. (*Ibid.*)

[9] "Un délégué me dit qu'il croyait que Si l'on prenoit pour ligne de demarckation celle que la france vouloit tracer avant la guèrre de 1756 on ne pourroit donner une plus grande marque de moderation puisque ce Seroit abandonner a l'Angleterre d'immenses territoires qu'Elle reclamoit au droit de Ses Colonies." This suggestion received the approval of Luzerne. (*Ibid.*)

[10] Quant au reglement des limites de quelques Etats nous ne nous mêlerons point mais nous desirons que les Americains n'entravint pas les negociations par des pretentions ensoutenables, leurs continents n'est pas trop vaste pour leur population, et ils seront longtems sans avoir besoin

that his master favored a restricted boundary, when the sense of his instructions pointed only to the necessity of peace. Accordingly he spoke favorably of the plan to restrict the United States to the boundaries which France had demanded before 1756.

The reports of Luzerne reveal three interests opposed to his policy: those of the large states like "Virginia and Massachusetts" which had western claims that they were anxious to maintain; those who feared to have the British too near their frontiers; and those who desired the continuance of the war for profit. Those who out of hatred for Great Britain desired to keep her as far as possible from the American frontiers were mostly small state men, and to these Luzerne devoted his greatest efforts. They believed that the vast regions of the West would soon fill up, and they felt it to be to the interests of their country to keep the new states in the Confederacy. To them Luzerne urged that no matter how extended their boundaries, they must still have neighbors.[11] He felt that if he could win over this class, the party of moderation would triumph.

There were so many contrary ideas in Congress that an agreement on definite instructions was next to impossible. The ideas of Luzerne were discussed but were bitterly opposed by Virginia, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, with New York not voting. Nothing was hoped from this latter state for its delegates were "even less tractable than the Virginians on the extent of the boundaries which they

de S'etendu pourquoi donc preferoient-ils à la paix future [un]contingent qui ne fera ni leur bonheur ni celui de leurs arrières neveux? Vergennes to Luzerne, June 28, 1782. (*E. U.*, XXI, no. 103, new 35.)

[11]". . . le parti que je me suis le plus attaché a persuader est celui des gens Sages et modèrés, mais que par haine pour l'Angleterre et par crainte de son ancienne influence vouloient la tenir a une grande distance des Etats-unis." Among these was the president of Congress. Luzerne to Vergennes, June 8, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVII, no. 145, fol. 17.) Luzerne spoke of the rapid settlements of Illinois and Kentucky and the danger this would be to the older states whose inhabitants they would entice away by the promise of cheap lands. *Ibid.*

wish to fix for Canada in the West."[12] The large state party was insistent upon the pretentious ultimatum of 1779; but most of the delegates were willing to accept the Ohio River, while a few more were inclined to take the watershed separating the East from the West.[13] Virginia was most aggressive and demanded first the line running from the mouth of the Miami to the headwaters of the Illinois, thence down that river to the Mississippi. When she found no support for this, she framed as her ultimatum that her northern boundary should be the Ohio, while the territory beyond must remain neutral.[14] Many delegates supported this proposition, but Luzerne declared himself against precise instructions and the motion failed. Yorktown was not yet taken, and so great was the discouragement in Congress that Luzerne believed that it would make almost any sacrifice for peace, even to accepting the Alleghanies as the western boundary. He recognized, however, that such an arrangement would cause universal complaint and arouse intense hostility to France.[15]

[12]Luzerne to Vergennes, June 11, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVII, no. 27, new 147.)

[13]*Ibid.*

[14]*Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XX, 612, 613.

[15]Le trosieme article laisse aux Plenipotentaires la plus grande latitude sur tous les autres points. Le premiere qui se presente est de determiner se qui constitue le Territoire des treize Etats. Il y a eû trois opinions differentes sur ce sujet dans le Congres. Quelques Delegues vouloient qu'on ne se departit point des limites fixées en 1779 et qu'on n'innovât rien à cet egard leur opinion n'a point prevalu. D'autres demanderent qu'on designât L'Ohio dans l'ultimatum. Ils observoient que c'etoit la limite la plus naturalle la plus sure, la moins Sujette a varier et il y avoit tant d'opinions en faveur de cette motive qu'il auroit dependu de moi de la faire passer mais j'ai trouvé des inconvenient à engager le Congres a rien determiner sur cette matiere.... J'ai pensé qu'il valoit mieux ne rien fixer avec precision..... Je me suis contenté de m'assûrer si l'Ohio forme cette limite les treize Etats ne se plaindront point qu'ils se croiront même obligés au Roi. . . . si les circonstances necessitent de plus grandes concessions que cette paix sera moins agreeable . . . Je crois . . . . que si les circonstances forcoient a adopter pour limites les montagnes qui separant les Rivieres qui se jettant dans l'atlantique de celles qui content a l'Ouest la paix seroit encore accepté et ratifée mais qu'elle

Altho the resolutions of Congress were agreeable to Luzerne they did not meet the points at issue and they were not in harmony with the desires of Vergennes, who had asked for definite instructions. The northwest boundary was vaguely outlined, while the possession of the Southwest, which was complacently assumed by Congress and tacitly agreed to by Luzerne, became at the very beginning of the negotiations the great point at issue. Vergennes had refused to interfere in the dispute and had even professed ignorance of the merits of the question and the silence of Luzerne is no less striking.

Altho there was much dissatisfaction with the instructions agreed to by Congress, the efforts to change them met with no success.[16] Livingston, however, explained fully to the peace commissioners the ambitions of the states and urged them to endeavor in every way to extend the western boundary to the Mississippi.[17] He felt strongly the danger of being surrounded by Great Britain, and it was in accord with his advice that the commissioners began their negotiations. It is remarkable that in all these discussions nothing was said of the pretensions of Spain, either by Luzerne or by the Americans.

In spite of the forgetfulness of Congress and the French minister, Spain had not given up her pretensions and her greed for territory was no less devouring than before. Eastern Louisiana was still an object of great interest, for she still was anxious to control the Gulf of Mexico without any one to dispute her claim, and to do this she must control the mighty Mississippi. Spain could then "make the law" for the settlers in the upper Mississippi

occasioneroit des plaintes générales qu'elle refroidirot nos partisans et qu'il seroit difficile a persuader aux Americains que leurs intêrets n'ont pas été sacrifics." Luzerne to Vergennes, June 13, 1781. (*E. U.*, XVII, no. 148, new 33.)

[16]The opposition proposed to reopen the whole question on the return of the New York delegates. Luzerne to Vergennes, July 14. (*E. U.*, XVII, no. 106, new 158.) Virginia revived her claims by a resolution of June 29. *Journals of Continental Congress* (Hunt ed.), XX, 713.

[17]Livingston to Franklin. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, V.)

Valley by the control of their commerce, or could force immigration into her own territories by the grant of special privileges.[18]

At the beginning of the negotiations Spain did not make any claim to the possession of Eastern Louisiana, but asked merely for the conquests promised her by the convention of 1779, with special emphasis on the guarantee of Gibraltar.[19] In addition to this she presented a demand for the Bahama Islands; but this was peremptorily refused by Vergennes, who declared he could sustain no claim beyond what he had agreed to by his convention with the court at Madrid. Spain did not insist upon this condition but maintained her claim to the "conservation of her conquests around the Gulf of Mexico."[20] Rodney's victory in the West Indies made impossible the conquest of Jamaica, which had been promised her; but in spite of the destruction of the fleets besieging Gibraltar, she still insisted upon its restitution.

To Spain as to the United States, Vergennes had always sought to keep his promises; and, tho realizing the weakness of his position, he set loyally to work to obtain the cession of Gibraltar to his ally. The failure of the siege of this stronghold made necessary the offer of some compensation. The negotiations on this point were long and tedious and nothing came of them.

In his desire to recover Gibraltar, Vergennes had sent his secretary Rayneval to London to interview Shelburne, who had recently come to power. Rayneval did not accomplish his purpose, but he opened up a series of discussions with Shelburne on the terms of peace.[21] Little was said regarding the boundaries in America, altho Shelburne im-

[18]See a "note on the new advantages which favor the commerce of Louisiana." Anonymous. (Transcript, *Margry Collections, Documents inédits sous Louisiane, Nou. Acq. franc.*, 9309.)

[19]Florida Blanca to Aranda, August 25, 1782. (*Esp.*, 608, no. 166.) Montmorin summed up the claims of Spain as that which was stipulated in the convention. (*Ibid.*, no. 15, new 31.)

[20]Montmorin to Vergennes, September 20. (*Esp.*, 608, no. 244.)

[21]Doniol, *Histoire*, V, 104.

plied that the West was not included within the bounds of the original colonies. Rayneval, however, refused to commit himself. Shelburne then let it be known that "the Floridas with a district up to the neighborhood of New Orleans, joined to the east territories which lie between the Mississippi and the Lakes, and the western frontiers of America, might form a proper equivalent for Gibraltar."[22] This idea did not please Vergennes, who feared the rivalry of Spaniards and British on the Mississippi, and it is doubtful if Shelburne meant it seriously.

Altho the mission of Rayneval was unsuccessful, Vergennes did not cease his efforts to keep his pledge to Spain, and offered to compensate Great Britain out of the possessions of France.[23] News of the signature of the preliminary articles of peace between the British and American negotiators, however, made Shelburne's demands so high that France determined to renew the war to keep her honor with Spain, and was preparing for another struggle when the British ministry and the Spanish court unexpectedly came to terms.

Vergennes was equally determined to keep faith with the United States, and in spite of a strong dislike for Adams, his friendship for the new nation was earnest and sincere. In every way he had pressed American interests at Madrid and had always urged Congress to vigorous action.[24] He had guaranteed independence to the United States and had maintained the war at great hardship in order to save the honor of France. As he refused to support Spanish claims to the Bahamas, so he declared also

[22]Vergennes to Montmorin, October 6, 1782. (*Esp.*, 609, no. 22, new 81.) Montmorin urged the proposition upon Florida Blanca as a barrier to the Americans; but the Spanish minister refused to consent to give the British a port [Pensacola] on the Gulf of Mexico, and also refused to cede any territory around the city of New Orleans. Montmorin to Vergennes, November 23. (*Ibid.*, no. 129, new 94.)

[23]Doniol, *Histoire*, V, 230.

[24]His statement to Montmorin that "the future of America is of equal interest to Spain and to us" sums up his efforts to secure recognition for his ally. (*Esp.*, 606, no. 159, new 11.)

that he would not support any extravagant pretensions on the part of Congress.[25]

On the question of the western boundaries France was at last compelled to declare herself through the insistence of Jay. He had been called to Paris by Franklin, and arrived there under the impression that he was to continue the negotiations in which he had not succeeded at Madrid.[26] He at once began a discussion with Aranda relative to the disposition of the Mississippi Valley, but the difference between them soon became apparent. Vergennes did not presume to interfere, altho Rayneval expressed surprise at the extent of Jay's demands,[27] and submitted a memorial explaining the principles on which the two countries ought to act.[28] To the territory south of the Ohio, Rayneval asserted, neither nation had any title except that of conquest; for before the treaty of 1763, he argued, it was owned by France, and after its cession to Great Britain, it was never incorporated with the colonies. Neither country, he urged, had conquered it, and so, by way of settling the dispute, he suggested a division by which the land south of the Tennessee should be under the suzerainty of Spain, and that to the north under the protection of the United States. As to the navigation of the Mississippi, Rayneval expressed the hope that some arrangement could be made by which

[25]"le roi ne sera pas moins exacte a les tenir de son coté . . . il n'en existe aucune dans nos traites qui l'oblige a prolonger La Guerre pour soutenir les pretentions ambitieuses que les Etats unis peuvent former soit par raport . . . a l'Etendue des Limites." He goes on to say that "je serai toujours a tems de venir a leur Secours car je prevois qu'ils auront plus d'une difficulté a vaincre et même très grandes s'ils persistent dans leurs premieres pretentions." This does not show a spirit of hostility. Vergennes to Luzerne, November 23. (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 43, fol. 138.) Before this Vergennes had written Montmorin that if the Americans would unite more thoroly they would be able to drive the British from the continent. (*Esp.*, 606, no. 159, new 11.)

[26]Doniol, *Histoire*, V, 108; Jay, *Life of Jay*, I, 137.

[27]Vergennes declared that he would keep silence the most absolute until he was asked to express his opinion. See p. 200.

[28]Rayneval said he was acting at Jay's request, and submitted this memorial as his *personal* ideas. Doniol, *Histoire*, V, 159.

the Americans could be given the right, subject to proper regulation. As to territory north of the Ohio, he held by the same reasoning that it was a part of Canada, and as such a fit object of negotiation between the Americans and British.[29]

This memorial was submitted merely as an opinion on the merits of the question. It was fortified by historical and legal allusions, against which the Americans could urge only their charter rights. It asserted that both Americans and Spaniards must base their claims on the right of conquest. It attempted to apportion to each power the territory which each held or had conquered, and tried to divide the unoccupied lands as equally as possible.[30]

Altho Vergennes still held to his determination not to interfere in the dispute between his allies,[31] he held to the belief that the domains west of the mountains were legally the property of Great Britain, subject only to the fortunes of war. He did not think that the charters were of any force, and maintained that whatever the Americans got out of the contest must be gained by war or diplomacy. He was willing to make good his guarantee of the independence of the United States with all their possessions, but he would not continue a war to make additional conquests. To neither Spain nor the United States would he

[29]Rayneval entitled this memorial an "Idea on the manner of determining and fixing the boundaries between Spain and the United States on one side of the Ohio and towards the Mississippi." (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 57, new 200.)

[30]Spain held Fort Natchez and all posts on the west banks of the river, from which she could make incursions into the disputed territories, and on this Rayneval based her claims to both banks of the river. As Fort Natchez was the only post to the Southwest, it was argued that the possession of it gave her claim to the whole of the territory. Doniol, *Histoire*, V, 159.

[31]"Au reste M. ces notions sont pour vous seul." Vergennes to Luzerne, October 14, 1782. (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 40, new 115.)

concede anything more than he had already promised, for he felt that peace was essential.[32]

The stand of Vergennes was due not to unfriendliness to the United States but to the desire for peace. He realized the importance of the West to the American nation, and wished it to take measures to extend its rights there.[33] In no way did he interfere with the negotiations between Aranda and Jay; nor did he attempt to control the American envoys in their efforts to get all they could. He repressed both Spain and the United States because his country needed peace; and when, without consulting him, the American envoys won more than he thought possible, he still applauded their ability.[34] Altho his willingness to aid the Americans received no returns, he showed nothing more than a momentary anger.

Vergennes was not alone in regarding the American claims to the West as without support. Shelburne had ridiculed the pretensions of Congress, and had declared that the Mississippi Valley had never been a part of the

[32]". . . . a present dans la discussion Subsistante entre M. de Cte d'Aranda et M. Jay que les deux parties reclament des countrées sur les quelles aucune d'Elles n'a de droit acquis et qu'il sera à peu pres impossible de les accorder." (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 40, new 115.)

[33]"il a été remis a M. Jay une notte confidentielle par la quelle il est a peu pres demontré que les limites des Etats-unis au Sud de l'Ohio se bornent aux montagnes en suivant le versant des eaux et que ce qui est au Nord de cette riviere nommement les lacs a autrefois fait parti du Canada." Vergennes to Luzerne. (*Ibid.*) Vergennes had gained this idea doubtless from the memorial of Rayneval, and this is the first time he expressed it. In spite of this purely legal view of the question Vergennes wrote, "Nous pensons comme les Americains, M. sur l'importance de l'etablissement des anglois a Oswego, cette station en même tems qu'elle en impose aux Sauvages met les Anglois en mesure de troubler les derrieres de la province de Newyork." *Ibid.*

[34]"Si les Commissioners americains sont exacts dans les comptes qu'ils rendent a leurs Commitans ils ne Se plaindront pas que nous cherchons a influenc et a les gener dans leur negociations." Vergennes to Luzerne, November 23. (*E. U.*, no. 43.) After the peace he wrote: "Vous aplaudirez surement M. aussique moi aux avantages tres Etendûs que nos allies les americains doivent recuiller par la paix." December 19. (*Ibid.*, no. 45.)

colonies.[35] Virginia, the most aggressive of all the states, had insisted upon nothing more than the Ohio as the boundary; but Congress did not have courage enough to insist upon even this much.[36] Even after Yorktown some of the most aggressive Americans offered to leave all the disputed territory in the West to the Indians under the joint protection of Spain, France, Great Britain, and the United States,[37] and several states agreed to accept the mountains as the western boundary.[38]

Military conditions also seemed to forbid the pretensions of Congress to extensive territories. The British still held the posts on the Great Lakes and continued to do so for many years. Parts of the South as well as the city of New York and other important posts were still in the hands of the enemy. Under these conditions it seemed that Vergennes was right in his declaration that Congress had no claim whatever to the wide regions of the West.

In spite of all these discouragements Vergennes stood ever ready to help the ambitions of his American allies. Altho he condemned the extravagance of the American claims, he never tried to get his allies to demand less, but offered rather to assist them to the best of his ability.[39] In spite of the unconcealed dislike of Jay and Adams, and his own dislike of them, Vergennes showed himself throughout a loyal friend to the United States. Even when he found his counsels disregarded and the pledges made to him badly broken, he showed no trace of jealousy or meanness. For the ability of the American diplomats he showed

[35]Doniol, *Histoire*, V, 133.

[36]See page 207, note 14.

[37]They told Luzerne that "si l'on assuroit aux Sauvages la possession des Pays contestés sous la garantie de la France, de l'Esp de l'Angleterre et des Etats-unis ce parti accomodiroit peutêtre tout le monde." Luzerne to Vergennes, September 12, 1782. (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 271, new 68.)

[38]Luzerne mentions Maryland as willing to accept this. (*Ibid.*, no. 89, new 275.)

[39]Vergennes to Luzerne, November 23, 1782. (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 160, new 43.) See also p. 211, note 25.

the greatest respect, and their success not only surprised him but aroused in him the liveliest admiration.[40]

To Vergennes America owes a great debt of gratitude for the preservation of its independence. In spite of the fact that he entered the war for a selfish purpose, from which he never entirely escaped, the years of common trials and efforts, the enthusiasm of the French people, and the personality of Franklin, infused his cold heart with something like enthusiasm for the nation he had called into existence, and for whose protection he devoted the best efforts of many years. We may give great praise to the foreign heroes who fought and died in defense of American liberties, but among all the friends of the new republic, no one can show a higher title to loyalty, not even the lovable and chivalrous Lafayette, than the care-worn and thoughtful statesman, Vergennes.

[40]Vergennes wrote of the American envoys that they were "no less practised than the English in the art of drawing indefinite lines and of making them a title and a right." Vergennes to Luzerne, November 23. (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 160.) He further declared that the English bought peace rather than made it. McLaughlin, *Confederation and Constitution* 30. In order to show his good will he made the Americans a new grant of six million livres immediately after the articles were signed. Doniol, *Histoire*, V. 269.

# CHAPTER XII

## PEACE

Peace, the goal towards which Vergennes had so patiently toiled, came at last; but it came through negotiations unknown to him, and by a diplomacy which overreached his own. During the early years of the war Vergennes had often expressed astonishment at British stupidity in alienating the colonies,[1] and he felt that he was scoring a triumph in winning them to France. With the overthrow of the North ministry, however, the accession to power of Shelburne, first, as secretary of state for the colonies, then as prime minister, all this was changed. Shelburne at once inaugurated a new policy, a policy of conciliation towards an independent republic, and, instead of humiliating America, he bid high for her friendship, and carried off the prize for which Vergennes had already paid so dearly.

With this plan in mind Shelburne had, early in the spring of 1782, sent Richard Oswald, a Scotch merchant, to Paris to sound Franklin on the conditions which the Americans would ask for peace, and to suggest a treaty separate from the one with France. To this idea of a separate treaty Franklin at once objected; but he was ready enough to suggest the terms of peace which he regarded as suitable.[2] Oswald talked much of conciliation and, with this idea in mind, Franklin declared that in order to conciliate, Great Britain should cede Canada to the United States, as an evidence of her good will.[3] This suggestion did not meet any objection from the British agent, who asked permission to submit it to his government, and the

[1] See page 14.

[2] Franklin's Journal, *Writings* (Smyth ed.), VIII, 463.

[3] *Ibid.*, 472.

American envoy consented. A few days later Oswald informed Franklin that he thought the "affairs of Canada would be settled to [your] satisfaction," but he asked that it be not pressed until near the end of the negotiations.[4]

The negotiations dragged slowly on until midsummer, when Franklin became more active; and, on July 10, he outlined to Oswald a definite plan of a treaty, which made as a necessary article "a confinement of the boundaries of Canada to what they were before the last act of Parliament, I think in 1774, if not to a still more contracted state on an ancient footing," and which declared that the cession of all Canada was advisable.[5] Oswald submitted these conditions to Shelburne, who in the meantime had become prime minister, and had left Townshend to direct negotiations with the Americans. Townshend followed Shelburne's liberal policy and agreed to the withdrawal of British forces from the states, and promised also a part of the "ungranted lands to be annexed to each province in return for the restoration of the loyalists."[6]

In the meantime negotiations were going on rapidly in Paris, and early in August Franklin and Vergennes united in demanding a "treaty that no one would break."[7] Shortly after this Franklin plead with Oswald to grant the Americans a permanent peace on such conditions as not "to force them into the hands of other people," and he explained that in order to ensure such a peace the United States must have Canada.[8] From the drift of the negotiations and the avowals of Oswald the experienced American saw the British ministry was willing to sacrifice much for peace, and still more to win the friendship of the United States. Oswald complained that the French proposals were exorbitant and appealed to Franklin to check them;[9]

[4]Franklin, Writings (Smyth ed.), VIII, 486.
[5]Oswald to Shelburne, July 10, 1782. (*F. O., France,* 2a, fols. 42-44.)
[6]Dated July 25, 1782. (*Ibid.,* 2a, fols. 87-92.)
[7]Oswald to Townshend, August 7, 1782. (*Ibid.,* 141.)
[8]Oswald to Townshend, August 13, 1782. (*Ibid.,* 152-161.)
[9]Oswald to Townshend, August 15, 1782. (*Ibid.,* 2a, 173.)

but that wily statesman pressed his advantage so strongly that the British agent was compelled to advise the acceptance of his demands.[10]

The British government acted before receiving Oswald's communication, and on September 1 acceded to the full extent of Franklin's ultimatum of July 10. By this it agreed to recognize, first of all, independence. The third article provided for the restriction of the boundaries of Canada to what they were before 1774; the fourth granted the freedom of fishing on the banks of Newfoundland; and another clause added that: "His Majesty will also waive collection of debts before 1775 and also claims of refugees for losses."[11]

Here was granted all that the Americans could hope to obtain and more than was to be ultimately conceded them. It had been the aim of the Shelburne ministry to detach the United States from France and these conditions were well calculated to effect it. The genius of the mighty Franklin had triumphed.

On September 5, Oswald wrote Franklin that he had received definite information as to the views of the British ministry in regard to the terms of the treaty, and was then ready to begin formal negotiations.[12] Franklin replied three days later, asking for a copy of Oswald's instructions,[13] and it appeared that the terms would soon be satisfactorily settled.

These instructions, however, were never submitted to Franklin. Jay had arrived at Paris some time before and

[10]Oswald strongly urged the cession of that part of Canada added by the act of 1774. "If not granted," he wrote, "this will cause much difficulty, especially on the western frontier, and a refusal would occasion a particular grudge as a deprivation of an extent of valuable territory, the several provinces have always counted upon as their own." He advised also that a right to the fisheries be granted to avoid quarrels with New England. Oswald to Townshend, August 29, 1782. (*F. O., France*, 2a, fol. 234.)

[11]Townshend to Oswald, September 1, 1782. (*Ibid.*, 2a, 101.)

[12]Oswald to Franklin, September 5. (Wharton *Dip. Cor.*, V, 699.)

[13]Franklin to Oswald, September 8. (*Ibid.*, V, 712.)

begun an aimless negotiation with Aranda which led to nothing, because the two could not agree on the exchange of their commissions.[14] Franklin had been sick since June and was willing to entrust the burden of affairs to his young associate, who was only too glad to undertake the more congenial task. Jay was a far different man from Franklin. He was young and comparatively inexperienced in the management of men, and he possessed neither the reputation nor the personality that gave such weight to the words of his aged compatriot. Jay had come to Paris disgusted with the Spaniards, but he soon came to dislike the French more, and he hated the British as a patriotic American should.

The attitude of Jay at once made it impossible to continue the negotiations; for, on reading the commission of Oswald, he found that it did not recognize the independence of the United States and refused to treat until a new commission was framed with form more to his liking. Franklin protested, but in vain. Oswald was compelled to write for a new commission and the negotiations were held up for several weeks; it was not until September 28 that the two were ready to renew the discussion of terms of peace.[15]

In the meantime Jay had found fresh causes of suspicion against the French court. Vergennes had advised him to continue the negotiations and to allow Oswald to act under his old commission, and this had convinced him that "this court chooses to postpone an acknowledgement of our independence by Britain, to the conclusion of a general peace in order to keep us under their direction." The British had transmitted to him a copy of an intercepted letter from Marbois which opposed American claims on the fisheries,[16] and the memorial of Rayneval on the terms of set-

[14] Jay to Livingston, September 18. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, V, 740.)

[15] Jay to Adams, September 28. (*Ibid.*, 778.)

[16] Jay to Livingston, September 18, 1782. (Wharton, *Dip, Cor.*, V, 740.) It is doubtful if this letter of Marbois' is authentic, as the French envoy always wrote in cipher.

tlement between Spain and the United States had angered him. With these feelings he was sure to be alarmed at any unforeseen move on the part of the French court. Jay at once became suspicious of Rayneval's mission to London, and decided to despatch an agent to Shelburne to counteract any intrigues of the French secretary. Benjamin Vaughn, a friend of America, was selected for this purpose, and he was instructed to show the ministry that it was "the obvious interest of Britain, immediately to cut the cords which tied us to France," and to propose a settlement with Great Britain with this undertaking as a basis.[17] Vaughn proceeded to London, had several interviews with Shelburne and convinced him that the United States were willing to break away from France.

Oswald's new commission arrived on the 27th and he and Jay at once drew up a proposed treaty on the basis of the instructions of September 1.[18] The first article provided for the boundaries asked by Congress in 1778, and included, besides what was later assigned the United States, the Great Lakes and the territory south of Lake Nipissing.[19] In this treaty, as in all subsequent projects, there was a provision for the free navigation of the Mississippi.

Altho Townshend had authorized these terms, he disavowed the treaty. The reason is obvious. He had offered these concessions in order to separate the United States

[17]Jay to Livingston. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, VI, 29.)

[18]Jay to Livingston. (*Ibid.*, 47.)

[19]"The said states are bounded north by a line drawn from the north-west angle of Nova Scotia, along the highlands which divide those rivers which empty into the river St. Lawrence, from those which fall into the Atlantic Ocean, to the northermost head of the Connecticut river, thence down along the middle of that river to the 45th degree of north latitude . . . . thence due west to the northernmost side of the river St. Lawrence . . . . thence straight to the south end of Lake Nepissing, and thence straight to the source of the Mississippi." On the west the United States were to be bounded by the Mississippi and on the south by the Floridas. (*Ibid.*, V, 806; *F. O., France*, 29, 305.)

from French influence,[20] but the mission of Vaughn showed him that this end was already accomplished. Before this time the British put forth, as the chief aim of their policy, conciliation; and it was with this understanding that Franklin and Oswald had carried on their negotiations, and upon it Franklin had based his demands. To Great Britain, however, conciliation did not mean so much friendship to her as enmity to France; and when the Shelburne ministry perceived that the councils of their enemies were divided they withdrew their bids for friendship.

Jay was deeply disappointed at the failure of his efforts. He felt that he must strive against all Europe and even against his fellow negotiator. "I think we have no rational dependence except on God and ourselves," he wrote, "nor can I yet be persuaded that Great Britain has either wisdom, virtue or magnanimity enough to adopt a perfect and liberal system of conciliation."[21] His disappointment was the keener for the assurances of Oswald had convinced him that there would be no objection to the treaty as drawn up. He now showed the greatest indignation towards Oswald and even resorted to threats of breaking off the negotiations.[22]

However much Jay felt anger at the duplicity of Britain, he gained no love for France.[23] His suspicion and distrust of her policy increased and soon after the arrival of Adams in October, the two resolved to keep secret from her all knowledge of their negotiations and forced the aged and enfeebled Franklin to agree.

[20]Shelburne wrote to Carleton and Digby, June 3, that independence was offered "with the view of showing America that farther war was only in the interest of France and Spain, and to detach her from France." (*C. O. 5*, Vol. 178, fol. 439.)

[21]Jay to Livingston, November 17. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, VI, 49.)

[22]Jay replied that in the case of the refugees nothing could be done; and that if Great Britain broke off negotiations on that account, the United States would present claims against her for unnecessary destruction in war." Oswald to Townshend, November 6. (*F. O., France*, 29, fol. 340.)

[23]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, VI, 47.

From this time on, however, the British conducted their negotiations in a different spirit. Hitherto they had talked of conciliation, and even of federal union; but now they began to push more vigorously their material advantages. Oswald had served well enough when conciliation was the end, and he still remained at Paris, where his frankness and sincerity were a valuable asset. To push the claims of the empire, however, a different man was necessary; and the shrewd and determined Strachey was sent to look after the boundary question and the disposition of the loyalists.[24]

Strachey began his efforts with vigor. No longer were there projects of ceding Canada, but in place of this there was a demand that the country north of the Ohio be used to found a colony of loyalists.[25] Nothing had been said of this in the previous negotiations, but now Strachey added a restriction of the right to fish on the banks of the Newfoundland. Of the arguments used to beat down the new demands of Britain we know little; but Adams and Jay were determined men and resolved to surrender nothing.

On the north the Americans offered the choice of two lines. The first provided a boundary running from the intersection of the forty-fifth parallel with the Connecticut river due west to the Mississippi. The second ran west on the same parallel to the St. Lawrence, thence through the middle of the Great Lakes to the sources of the Mississippi.[26] Both provided that in case Great Britain should keep Florida the southern boundary should run through the mouth of the Yazoo due west to the Applachicola, and both provided also for the free navigation of the Mississippi. Strachey had been borne down by the superior skill and determination of his adversaries, but he refused to do

[24]Townshend to Oswald, October 23, 1782. (*F. O., France,* 2a, 328.) Of Strachey Adams wrote, "He is artful and insinuating. He pushes and presses every point as far as it could possibly go; he is the most eager, earnest, pointed spirit."

[25]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, VI, 113.

[26]*Ibid.*, V. 856. Strachey to Townshend, November 8, 1782. (*F. O., France,* 2a, 363; *C. O. 5,* 8.)

more than transmit the proposed treaties to Townshend for his consideration. Neither of them was in accord with the instructions sent out by the British ministry, but the Americans had pronounced this their ultimatum.[27]

The provisions regarding the Floridas were the result of Jay's efforts and grew out of his dislike for Spain and perhaps also of a desire to embarrass Vergennes. Jay had formerly been very hostile to Great Britain; but this had changed under the genial frankness of Oswald and through the suspicious attitude of his allies into a feeling of friendship.[28] During the early days of September, while Oswald was waiting for his new commission, Jay often talked informally with him of the Floridas, and in these conversations, the British envoy often expressed the desire that if Great Britain should keep them their boundary might be pushed still further to the north. Jay met the suggestion kindly and declared that since the proclamation of 1763 the boundary had been moved northward by another proclamation.[29]

With this the matter was allowed to drop, but Jay brought it forward again when he took up the negotiations with Oswald, and suggested that the British forces in New York be sent on an expedition to seize these provinces.[30] He declared that he did not want to leave in the hands of the Spaniards authority over the Gulf of Mexico and with it control of the western trade; and he maintained that any agreement regarding this region would not be a violation of the alliance with France.[31] Jay argued

[27]Wharton, Dip. Cor., V, 856; *F. O., France,* 2a, 363; *C. O. 5,* 8.

[28]Until the middle of August Oswald believed that nothing could be expected of Jay. Oswald to Townshend, August 7. (*F. O., France,* 2a, 125.) Later he wrote, "Jay is more friendly." (*Ibid.,* 162.)

[29]Oswald to Townshend, September 11. (*F. O., France,* 2a, 332.) This was the proclamation of 1767.

[30]October 2. (*Ibid.,* 271.)

[31]"The employment of these troops [in America] against Spain would not infringe on the treaty with France, Jay says, for the states are not bound to Spain." (*Ibid.*) "Jay again insists that for the common good Florida shall not be left in the hands of the Spaniards." (*Ibid.,* 280.)

that the province was rich in itself and would be of additional advantage to the British in giving them control of both outlets to the Mississippi Valley; the Gulf and the St. Lawrence, by which they could hold all the trade they had ever possessed. As a final argument he urged that the retention of the Floridas would go far to win the friendship of the Americans. He became every day more earnest and finally offered to write General Washington asking him to permit the peaceable evacuation of New York and Charleston by the British troops.[32] Oswald was convinced, from Jay's earnestness, that he could carry the boundary of West Florida far to the northward.[33]

Townshend did not take kindly, however, to the efforts of Jay. He was suspicious of the whole transaction, but he believed that capital might be made of it if France should learn the details.[34] Oswald was anxious for the arrangement, and urged that if it had no other merit it would at least please the Americans.[35] Jay was afraid of the effect of his suggestions, and when the provision regarding the Florida boundary was inserted he "scored it out" but "admitted it in addition at the bottom as a separate article."[36] Jay himself was not proud of his tactics, and altho he dwelt with pride on the early negotiations with Oswald with which he had nothing to do, he never found occasion to discuss the part he took in the Florida boundary arrangement.[37]

In the later negotiations Franklin took little part and their success may be attributed to the vigor and determination of Jay and Adams. The man, who had won for the United States the aid of France and who had overreached the diplomacy of Britain, was now worn with disease, and was pushed out by his younger associates. He found his

[32]Oswald to Townshend, October 7. (*F. O., France,* 2a, 302.)

[33]October 8. (*Ibid.,* 310.)

[34]Townshend to Oswald, October 26. (*Ibid.,* 330.)

[35]Oswald to Townshend, December 4. (*Ibid.,* 489.)

[36]Oswald to Strachey, November 8. (*Ibid.,* 388.)

[37]Compare letters of Adams to Livingston on this question. (Wharton, *Dip. Cor.,* V, 856.)

advice overborne in their councils, and his suggestions disregarded; but to preserve harmony he still signed their despatches and forebore any opposition. Altho his shrewd mind must have seen clearly the contempt with which Adams and Jay regarded him,[38] he bore the humiliation patiently, and at last with hearty goodwill made their peace with the irritated Vergennes.[39]

The firmness of Jay and Adams was not due to any knowledge of the negotiations of their allies but to their own personal convictions. At that time, however, Florida Blanca and Shelburne were deadlocked over the question of Gibraltar; and unless terms were speedily arranged with the Americans, the allied powers might renew the war.[40] Under the circumstances Shelburne chose to give the United States favorable terms and detach them from the Bourbon alliance and then refuse the demands of Spain.

The work of Jay and Adams made it impossible for the Spanish court to realize its hopes. The Bourbons had offered Guadaloupe and San Domingo for Gibraltar and expected to settle on these terms. When Shelburne heard of the agreement with the Americans, however, he raised his price so high that it could not be accepted and, even after the preliminaries between Great Britain and the United States were signed, France threatened to renew the war.[41]

Shelburne was anxious for peace and made a last effort for conciliation. He offered to cede Spain the Floridas and Minorca provided she would surrender her pretensions to Gibraltar; and Spain seeing the helplessness of her position accepted these terms.

There remained the question of the navigation of the Mississippi. The British had conceded it to the Ameri-

[38]See Adams's Journal for his opinion of Franklin.

[39]Wharton, *Dip. Cor.*, V, 857.

[40]"Correspondence of Fitzherbert," who was negotiating with France and Spain. (*F. O., France, 7, 797*, et seq.)

[41]Doniol, *Histoire*, V, 228-231.

cans but their concessions were valueless. In the final negotiations Vergennes was to show again his friendship for the United States. If Great Britain had surrendered the right to navigate the Mississippi to Spain the Americans would have had no recourse. If she had fixed the boundaries of the Floridas in her treaty with Spain, American claims would have been weakened. Spain was anxious to obtain these advantages; Great Britain had no interest in refusing them; and to Vergennes alone must be given the thanks for thwarting Spanish ambition.[42]

The preliminaries of peace between Great Britain and the United States were agreed upon on November 20, 1782; between Great Britain and the Bourbon powers on January 20; and the question of the West passes out of the American Revolution.

The navigation of the Mississippi and the boundaries of the Floridas were still fruitful causes of dispute. Florida Blanca accepted the western boundary as agreed upon by the British and American negotiators, and began at once negotiations concerning the Mississippi.[43] Montmorin and Aranda recommended that New Orleans be made a free port; but this advice was too liberal for the Spanish minister.[44] Vergennes expressed similar views,[45] altho he

[42]"Je suis informé d'une maniere assez possitive que ce dernier [J. Adams] a mandé en amérique que nous avions cherché a les contre carrer en angre relative aux limites et . . . Des imputations de cette nature sont si absurdes qu'elles se detruisent parelles-mêmes cependant comme j'ai lieu a croire qu'elles ont quelques adherents en amerique et comme M. Adams doit y retourner incessament, je pense se devoir a tout evenement vous metter en état de lès refuter." Vergennes to Luzerne, September 7, 1783. (*E. U.*, XXV, no. 52, new 144.)

[43]Montmorin to Vergennes, February 18, 1783. (*Esp.*, 610, no. 67.) Vergennes wrote that the great trouble between the United States and Spain was the navigation of the Mississippi. (*Ibid.*, no. 80.)

[44]Montmorin to Vergennes, March 1, 1783. (*Ibid.*, no. 110.)

[45]Vergennes declared that Spain would not adopt his sentiments on account of contraband. (*Ibid.*, no. 149.) . . . la conduite de l'Espagne à l'egard des Etats-unis etablit une sisteme d'eloignement entre les deux nations. Vergennes to Luzerne, December 20, 1782, (*Ibid.*, XXII, no. 46, new 188.)

realized that they were futile. At the same time he urged moderation upon the Americans in their dealings with Spain,[46] and preserved to the last his rôle of harmonizer.

In America news of the peace was received with joy, altho there were many who complained that the boundaries of the country were too much restricted.[47] Spain raised no complaint, and Vergennes was happy that, in keeping the faith as an honest man, he had at last wrought the humiliation of England and glorified the prestige of his beloved France.

[46]Vergennes to Luzerne, December 20, 1782. (*E. U.*, XXII, no. 118.)

[47]". . . au milieu de cette agitation un petit nombre de délégués se ( ) montrent deja inquiets a l'egard des limites . . ." Luzerne to Vergennes, February 8, 1783. (*E. U.*, XXIII, no. 51, new 154.)

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## MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

### FRANCE.

A. Archives Nationales. Paris.—The materials found in the French National Archives fall into four groups: Archives des Colonies, Canada; Archives des Colonies, Louisiane, 44, division 2; Archives de la Marine, B. 4, cartons 125-402; Correspondance de Vergennes, series K, 164.

(This classification was taken from Doniol, and, altho the present arrangement is somewhat different, a request calling for the old numbers brought the works desired.)

Archives des Colonies, Canada, contain little material of the period of the Revolution, and most of the earlier material which I saw related mostly to questions of administration.

Archives des Colonies, Louisiane. These are largely of the same character as the former but they contain a few documents of a political character and some of first-rate importance.

État Sommaire des Archives de la Marine Antérieures à la Révolution, B 4, cartons 125-402.—These contain plans of naval and military operations from 1774 to 1783, many of them of such a character as to reveal the trend of French diplomacy, and also many documents of great political importance. This division is worthy of careful and exhaustive study.

Correspondance de Vergennes, series K, 164—I found little of importance in this.

B. Bibliothèque Nationale, Division des Manuscrits. Paris.—The Division of Manuscripts in the National Library is much better conducted than the National Archives; it is comparatively easy to learn what it contains and it is not difficult to gain access to any desired documents. Only the Doniol Transcripts and the Margry Collection were used.

1. Doniol, Henri. Histoire de la participation de la France à l'établissement des États-Unis d'Amérique. Copies et épreuves de l'imprimé. Paris. Impri. Nationale, 5 t. in 4°, 1888-1892. Don de l'auteur, H. M. Doniol, directeur de l'Imprimerie nationale. 34 vols. in mss. and proofs. Nouvelles Acquisitions françaises, 6464-6497. The volumes of these transcripts are classified as follows:

I-VI. Affaires Etrangères, Angleterre, 1774-1783.

VII. Bibliotèques et Archives anglaises, 1775-1782.

VIII-XVII. Affaires Etrangères, États-Unis, 1775-1782.

XVIII. Affaires Etrangères, États-Unis, Supple, 1765-1789.

XIX-XXIX. Affaires Etrangères, Espagne, 1774-1782.

XXX. Affaires Etrangères, Prusse, Vienne, Russie, Hollande, et Suede, 1776-1782.

XXXI. Archives et Bibliotèques nationales, documents divers, 1774-1795.

XXXII. Archives de la Marine, 1776-1782.

XXXIII-XXXIV. Archives de la Guerre, Correspondance de Rochambeau, 1799-1781.

These documents were, for the most part, well copied, and they were very useful when the original was illegible. They were also useful as a guide to the documents in the National Archives, the Foreign Office and in other places.

2. Margry, P. Documents inédits sous la Louisiane, études sous le titre d'histoire des cessions de la Louisiane. Nouvelles Acquisitions fran-

çaises, 9309 et seq.—Has a great number of transcripts of documents collected from many sources; many of these are very interesting.

C. Ministère, Archives des Affaires Etrangères. Paris.

1. Angleterre. Vols. 500 et seq.—The documents in this series do not reveal much of French policy, as Vergennes did not take the ambassadors to England fully into his confidence. The series has nothing regarding the West.

2. Espagne. Vols. 570-610 (1774-1783).—This contains the sources for all the diplomatic negotiations between France and Spain during the Revolution, the correspondence between Vergennes and the French ambassadors to Spain, between these ambassadors and the Spanish court, and minutes of cabinet meetings, the decision of which might involve Spain, copies of many Spanish documents relating to the American Revolution, and other documents of importance. On account of the close relations of the two countries we find here the fullest account of Spanish and French policy regarding the territories at stake in the Revolution.

3. France. Vols. 410 et seq. (1774-1783).—These volumes contain some documents of great importance, but comparatively few by men who were directing affairs.

4. États-Unis. Vols. 1-25 (1778-1784).—These volumes contain the diplomatic communications between Vergennes and the French agents in America. With the series Espagne they give the whole policy of France toward the American Revolution. They also give much information concerning the resources of the country, the internal conditions in the United States, and politics both within and without Congress. The accounts of Gerard and Luzerne, of Washington, Gouverneur Morris, Jay, Madison, John and Samuel Adams, and the Lees, represent them in quite a different light from that commonly accepted, and give new information on the lapses of some of them.

The Archives des Affaires Etrangères have a double system of numbering the documents contained therein. They were first numbered consecutively as they were filed, and Doniol referred to these numbers alone. Since then the documents have been in part renumbered according to another system; in the text references are made to both systems, the old and the new.

## GREAT BRITAIN.

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B. Public Record Office. London.

1. Colonial Office Papers 5, Nos. 7-264. Letters of the secretaries of state, orders in council, minutes of council meetings, abstracts of letters, Indian affairs, petitions, military dispatches, war office papers, commissions to colonies, peace commissions, Pelham correspondence, and a great quantity of miscellaneous matter.——The Colonial Office is rich in materials concerning the activities of the British in the Mississippi Valley, their plans

and their methods of carrying them out, and it also contains personal papers that shed light on the subject.

2. Foreign Office.

a. America and West Indies, Vol. 290. Letters on Spanish support to the rebels on the Mississippi (1776-1778).

b. France, Nos. 2-10. Advices and intelligences, correspondence of Thomas Walpole, Richard Oswald, Alleyne Fitzherbert, Thomas Grenville, Duke of Manchester, William Strachey, Thomas Townshend, and the Earl of Shelburne (1782-1783).—This series describes all the negotiations between England and the allies from the British viewpoint, and reveals quite fully the plans and purposes of the British ministers.

c. Miscellaneous.

No. 8. American duplicates, 1782-1783.

No. 468. Foreign minister's letter book, 1782-1783.

No. 535. American negotiations in Paris, 1782-1783. This is a collection of transcripts of the most important papers describing the negotiations at Paris. I had no opportunity to see this number as it was, at the time when I was in London, withdrawn from the use of the public.

d. Spain. No. 85. Miscellaneous dispatches of small importance for this subject. All the documents described above in the Public Record Office, except that otherwise noted, were used in the preparation of this study. Many more were consulted, but, as they proved of no value for my purpose, they are not described. No attempt is made, however, to give a full description of these documents, for they are fully and carefully described in Andrews' *Guide to the Public Record Office.*

## UNITED STATES.

A. Department of State. Washington.

1. Papers of the Continental Congress.

No. 5. Secret Journals of Foreign Affairs, November 29, 1775-September 16, 1778. 3 vols. folio.—These have been published in the *Journals of the Continental Congress.*

No. 18. Foreign letters of R. L. Livingston.

No. 79. Letters of the Committee of Foreign Affairs and of R. L. Livingston, secretary for foreign affairs. 3 vols. and appendix. Vol I, letter book of the committee of foreign affairs and of R. L. Livingston, 1776-1782. Vols. II and III, letters of R. L. Livingston. Appendix, letter book of the Committee of Foreign Affairs, 1776-1781.—Many of these have been published in Wharton.

No. 82. Letters of Franklin to the President of Congress and to R. L. Livingston, secretary for foreign affairs. 3 vols. folio.—Many or perhaps all of these are published in Smyth's edition of Franklin's Works.

No. 85. Letters of the Joint Commissioners for the negotiations of peace. 1 vol. folio.—Published in Wharton.

No. 95. Letters of de la Luzerne. 2 vols. folio.—These are im-

portant in showing the methods by which the French attempted to influence Congress.

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2. Franklin Papers.

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No. 12. Oswald's Journal (transcripts), 1782.

No. 13. Franklin's Journal, 1782.

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B. Library of Congress, Division of Manuscripts. Washington.

1. Papers of the Continental Congress.

No. 4. Secret Journals of Congress, Foreign and Domestic, from October 18, 1780, to March 29, 1881, folio.

No. 7. Journal of Congress called the "more secret journal," June 6. 1781-August 8, 1782. Pamphlet, original and letter book.

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No. 13. Letter books of the Presidents of Congress (Henry Laurens) containing official letters from November 1, 1777, to December 8, 1778. 2 vols., folio and index.

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No. 18. Letter books (A and B) of Charles Thomson, secretary of Congress, containing the record of official letters from November 20, 1779, to May 1, 1789. 2 vols. folio.

No. 25. Reports of committees relating to the Department of Foreign Affairs from 1776 to 1788. 2 vols. folio. Each volume has two parts.

These four numbers show the efforts of Congress to work out a policy towards the West. With these and the letters of Gerard and Luzerne we have a full account of this policy.

No. 41. Memorials addressed to Congress from 1775 to 1778. 15 vols. folio and index.

No. 48. Memorials of the inhabitants of Illinois, Kaskaskia, and Kentucky, 1780-1785. 1 vol. folio.

No. 50. Letters and papers of Oliver Pollock from 1772 to 1782. 2 vols. folio. With them is a bundle of letters relating mostly to the purchase of slaves.

These three numbers give important information in regard to the state of public feeling in the West, and from the letters of Pollock much information can be gathered regarding Spanish aid to the Americans.

No. 166. Letters and papers relating to Canadian affairs, to General Sullivan's expedition in 1779, and to the northern Indians. It also gives an account of Lafayette's proposed expedition of 1778. Folio.

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4.————Transcripts of documents relating to the French alliance, 1778-1784. 19 boxes.—Documents transcribed from the French Foreign Office, principally correspondence of Vergennes with the French ministers in America, office minutes, taken mostly from the Archives des Affaires Etrangères, États-Unis, III-XXVII.

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